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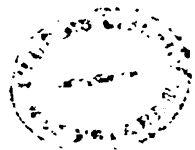
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L A S C I N E .

BY

AN OXFORD MAN.

"Nōsse omnia hæc salus est adolescentutia."—TERENTIUS.

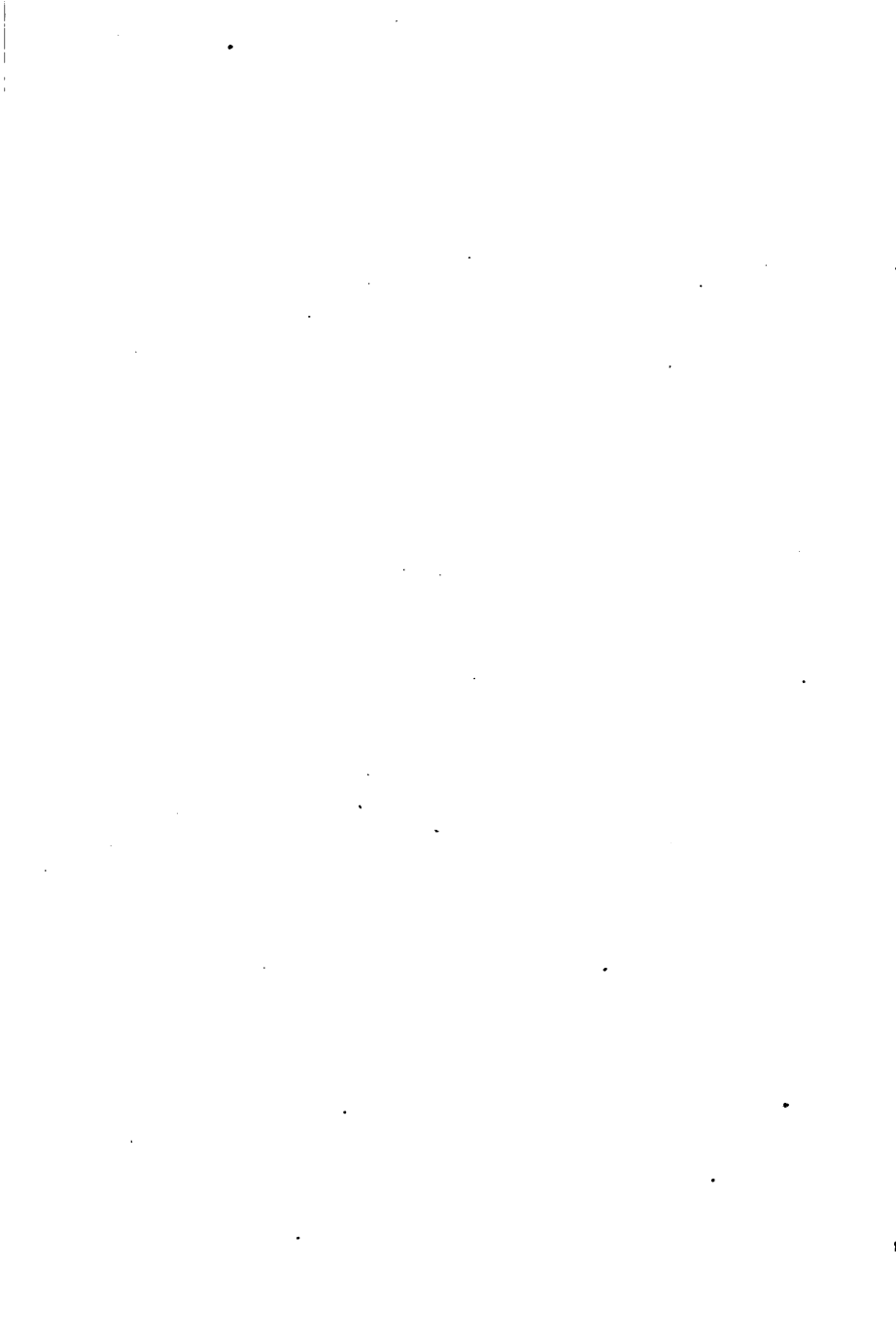


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TO MARK
FOUR MOUNDS
NESTLING IN AN
ENGLISH CEMETERY.



PROLOGUE.

IN the "Far West," snowed up in a miserable ranch for a month, with nothing to do, no one to talk with excepting two plough-boys.

One evening, whilst listlessly gazing into the depths of the fire, with the wind sweeping over the prairies and whistling around the corners of the ranch, the idea struck me of putting on paper the thoughts that were rushing through my brain, and which were gradually forming the groundwork of this story.

The miserable lamp flickered in the corner, fighting with the draught for its life; every thing seemed combining to make one meditate on the sorrowful threnody of life, carrying tears from its birth.

To conquer this feeling, in despair I took up my pen.

You have the result lying before you.

By the advice of those older and wiser than myself, I launch this tiny bark. Should any one "read between the lines," and a spark of nobleness, buried with the old childhood's simplicity, be reawakened; should the yearnings after the good and the beautiful take root once more in a nature sodden with worldliness—the end will be answered, the book will have done its work.

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L A S C I N E .

CHAPTER I.

"IN HAC LACRYMARUM VALLE."

THE shadows of the early morning fell softly and caressingly around the old home ; the perfume from the flowers, borne along by the slight breeze, crept in by the open windows. The leaves of the great tulip-tree on the lawn rustled gently together, telling of a strange, unearthly peace, as if they knew that a good man lay dying within the walls that had sheltered him from his childhood.

Yes, the strong man lay stricken unto death. No more should that tongue speak words of kindness to those dependent on him ; no more should those hands tend the flowers he loved so well ; for the great Master was calling him onward, into the lands where shadows are not, " and where beauty

withers not, nor does love grow cold, nor joy wane away, for there we gaze evermore on the face of the Lord God of hosts."

That terrible hæmorrhage had set in. Terrible, indeed, was it to see the crimson stream pouring from his lips, and know that science was powerless to help him more—sad, indeed, to see a strong man lying there in such weakness—sad, indeed, to feel the chilliness of that marble-white forehead as one gently stroked back the black hair from his eyes.

A low, gurgling sound escaped the sick man's lips. A lady, clad in deep mourning, bent over him, taking in her own hand the basin which the nurse held. The bleeding slowly subsided; he made an effort to gasp one word; slowly and painfully the accents came—"Ed-dy!"

"Hush, my husband! I understand."

Half an hour elapsed. He was sleeping from exhaustion. A tall, elegant young fellow entered the room, clad in a *négligé* mourning suit, the same regular features and dark eyes proclaiming him the son of the dying man.

"Well, mother, any better news, now?"

"Hush! Be in the dining-room in ten minutes; I have something to talk over with you."

"Bien, ma mère."

A look of intense pain stole over the youth's handsome face as he left the room, which told, in spite of his careless manner, how much he loved the dying man.

The ten minutes slowly passed, when the lady in black noiselessly entered the dining-room. His arm was on the window-sill; his eyes wandering over the garden to the great engine-chimney beyond, where the huge rolls of smoke were going up into the cloudless sky.

"John!"

No answer.

"John!"

The figure of the young man moved this time, his thoughts coming down from the dream-lands, where they were wandering. One could see the eyes dim with unshed tears.

"Well, mother?"

"John, he was asking for Eddy."

A silence fell over the mother and son for some minutes.

"We must send for him, then, mother," said John, breaking the silence.

"Yes, my son," came sadly from the lady's lips.

"Poor old boy! what a trial it will be to him! Do you know, mother, I often think we are wrong to treat a member of the family like this?"

"Wrong!"—and a flash of pride came into the mother's eyes. "Rather, far rather would I have seen him in his coffin. Ay, have put him there myself than have seen him as he now is—an apostate from our Church, a Catholic, irrevocably parted from us."

"Well, mum, I don't see it. I am determined to alter my tactics, and make up to the poor boy, as much as I can, for the past."

The mother hastily turned her face on one side. Her voice quavered as she said: "Write to him at once; or, better, telegraph, and then he can come to-night."

"All right, *ma mère*."

Almost before he could answer, he was alone. A sigh broke from his lips—"Poor old Eddy!" then a long, low whistle. "Nearly two years since we saw him, except for the few days at Herbert's funeral, and then to find us thus!"

A carriage rolled slowly up the drive, and the wheels stopped at the front-door. The doctor alighted; then came the professional ring; then he

was ushered into the drawing-room, to wait the arrival of the other physicians for the consultation. One by one they came in, until the four physicians were there; then the steps passing upward to the sick-room; then the long, weary minutes of waiting.

At last they came, once more, on into the drawing-room; once more the long waiting; John and his mother alone in the dining-room.

"At length!" muttered John, as steps sounded in the hall. The door opened, and the familiar face of Dr. Pinton appeared.

"Doctor, is there no hope?" burst from the lips of Mrs. Lascine.

"None," replied Dr. Pinton. "God is very merciful, though. Thank Him, dear madam—the end will be painless."

She was stunned by the blow, the force was so great. No pain came with it, only the dull, heavy, indescribable something that, for the time being, the mind could not grasp.

"And Eddy, madam, must not he come?"

"Yes, yes, doctor, we will send for him!" Then the arms sank listlessly by the side, and, after a while, the face was buried in the hands.

"Mr. John, won't you telegraph for my dear boy Eddy, and Mrs. Crowner?"

John took up his straw hat, and went out mechanically through the soft air of the May morning along the white, dusty road to the telegraph-office. The people raised their hats, but he passed on unheedingly.

The telegrams sent, in the same mechanical way he returned to the house over which death was pending. He passed up-stairs to his own study, but, in the next chamber, he heard people moving. It was Eddy's room. He passed in; the hangings were white as ever; the books lay on the shelf as he had left them. There stood the *prie-dieu*, with its tiny retable above: the two vases with the dead lilies in, that Eddy had placed there about the feet of the Crucified when he was last at home.

John looked at all these things with a strange reverence to-day, and he felt that that one look at the crucifix, with the dead lilies lying at the feet, had taught him more than all those tedious Sunday services which bored him so.

He turned to the well-supplied bookcase, and took up some volume, he knew not what. He

opened it, and saw it was Tennyson. It opened at "Locksley Hall;" a deep pencil-line ran under these words: "A sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things;" then a foot-note, in pencil, from Dante:

"Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria."

"Poor boy, I hope he has not realized that!" he said, as he closed the book and stole softly down to the sick-room, where we will leave him.

CHAPTER II.

P R E S E N T A T I O N S .

"The past and present here unite
Beneath Time's flowing tide,
Like footsteps hidden by a brook,
But seen on either side."

LONGFELLOW.

WHAT is the life that will bloom out grandly in the sunshine of the second life? I know only one model life, but that wise earthlings counted then a failure. Yet the one perfect life ever lived—devoid was it of wealth, riches, and fame. Noiselessly and swiftly it passed to a violent death-agony of ignominy. Yet who dare question that it was the one perfect life—this highest thought of divinity, uttered in humanity—this low, sweet music of humility? Yet we turn to life, with its wondrous pleasure dashed in with deep shades of sorrow, and ask about this life, Who has realized it?

who has read it? Has the aged, gray-haired man, on its border-land? No; for still he wishes to live—to unlearn many things he has learned. Often from the death-bed the echo comes to us, “O God! would that my time could come over again, how differently I would act!” Has youth learned the great problem of life? No; for, with arms stretched out to a shadowy something in the future, it hastens onward, always to some pinnacle of fancied happiness. It is attained, and the gray light of dawn sees the pleasure turn to ashes in the grasp. It is attained—carelessly thrown on one side for some other bauble. So it is with youth. What, then, of middle age? Ay, that too is ever stretching forward into the future to try to grasp its something, and that too, when grasped, fades into shadow-land before some new object. No time for thought; always, ever the tramp, tramp, tramp, for the milestone; and, when it is reached, no rest—on, on, on, to the next. Thus in life the first early dawn passes to the noonday; then the descent; the border-land once more; the crimson and gold of the fading sun of life, and poor humanity, before it knows, is held within the bounds of the church-yard, and the green grass waves over

what once has been the "temple of the Holy Ghost," what once has been animated with the breath of God. Humanity, with no time to think, with nothing thought out, with nothing done—this will not bloom out grandly in the sunshine of the second life. But the world has its thinking ones, its noble men, its noble women, its noble children—noble lives, indeed, who have analyzed and found out life's *summum bonum*. Is it placed in pleasure, riches, friends, position? No—the pleasure must pass, the riches will take wing, the friends prove false, the foundation-stone of the position fall away, and the whole edifice crumble. Philosophy would teach us to place our *summum bonum* in Him who gathereth the waters in the hollow of His hand, whose voice the thunders obey, and who watches each action of puny man from that habitation whence the sun draws its light, and whose sapphire throne shall be the last milestone at which poor humanity shall hear its doom.

Let us turn now to poor Mr. Lascine, who has almost reached that last milestone. Perhaps, if we look at him on his bed, we may learn something. The high forehead, the regular chiseled features,

with an expression of sorrow thrown over them, speak of intense refinement, a sensitive disposition, and great generosity. Ah, well can I say so, who write !

Mr. Lascine was a mill-owner. In early life his father had been unfortunate ; but the rich Miss Treven had fallen in love with Edward Lascine, who, of good family, well educated, cultivated, and refined, was a fit match even for Miss Treven. Her old uncle, crusty and testy to most of her suitors, could not refuse his consent to this match. "Never did God make," said he, "two young people more fitted for each other." And so, after a short engagement, the marriage was celebrated at St. Winefrides, Holynton, the small church on the estate of old Mr. Treven.

With the marriage portion of Miss Treven the mills belonging to old Mr. Lascine were bought, together with the lovely estate which had been the home of Mr. Edward Lascine all his life.

"A happy marriage," people had said ; and for once they were right. Four children had blest this marriage : Maude, now sleeping in the village cemetery that long, unending sleep. Even now one often sees the villagers stand by the marble

cross, or the grave covered with white blossoms, themselves twining the railings with the deathless, everlasting flowers, and talking of the fair girl whom they had loved, and who slept at eighteen summers. Next came May—Mrs. Crowner—who will be introduced to our readers shortly. Then John Lascine, of whom our friends must judge themselves. Lastly, Edward, the youngest—well, he has been telegraphed for, and will soon come, so we need not detain him in this chapter, and we shall meet him elsewhere.

Mrs. Lascine was still a stately beauty; but one could discern in the depths of her blue eyes a wondrous firmness, and could perceive now and again a curl of disdain resting on her pretty lips. The pure expression and profile on the whole were perfect, and, in the matronly grace of the woman of forty-five, one could judge of the beauty of the young girl of nineteen.

Had this been a happy match, this love-match? Yes; in only one thing had Mr. and Mrs. Lascine ever disagreed. As usual, it was the money question. Mr. Lascine would keep in business when he had no need to do so. And why? Because he devoted the profits to his generous purposes, for

the good of his tenants and the villagers. Now and then this subject would cause disagreement. On these occasions Mr. Lascine would go out to his flowers, and the crows'-feet would faintly appear—those unwelcome marks of care—on Mrs. Lascine's pretty face. So poor Mr. Lascine had gone on being good to every one, helping one here and one there, giving money to this charity and to that, thus quietly and noiselessly opening the distant gates of heaven amid the bustle and roar of fashionable life.

From our first chapter you, dear reader, have gained a knowledge of the family. May Lascine, or Mrs. Crowner, is now a widow of three months, and it is for Herbert Crowner that the family are at present in mourning.

Edward Lascine, the younger son, lately became a Catholic, and is not on the best terms with the family. We have to follow him through many painful scenes before we leave him calm and happy, stranded high on the rock, with the waves that now buffet and toss him hither and thither lying calm and peaceful beneath his feet. Poor boy! as I write of him now, my heart bleeds at the thought of all he has suffered, and the "long space he has

fulfilled in a short time ;” the tears glide slowly from beneath my eyelids ; but, when I see his face so calm and quiet, which suffering has toned down to a fair, unknown beauty, and hear his eloquent voice warning others of the dangers he has passed, and saving them from shipwreck, I say, “It is well !”

CHAPTER III.

NO DREAM-LAND.

That holy dream! that holy dream!
While all the world were chiding,
Hath cheered me as a lovely beam,
A lonely spirit guiding.

EDGAR A. POE.

THE November winds were howling round the corners of the old College of St. Osmund, sweeping up from under the hills, waving the leafless branches of the trees, playing in among the clumps with a weird mirth. The beautiful grounds of fifty or sixty acres were sad enough now, and the ornamental clumps of trees sighed and groaned again; on the paths stood small puddles of water, but, among this cheerless outside, the college chapel stood grandly out against the gray sky, also the college and the outbuildings—all Gothic—Gothic as Gothic minds well versed in architecture could make them.

And this Gothic Roman Catholic college stood inland, in one of England's most beautiful counties. I do not name the county, because true events will be laid before you, gentle readers, and I would not give agony to any mind, which I know I should do if I laid names of places open to my readers. Often—yes, very often—pens cut sharper than knives. If people should take up this book, and therein trace the characters—should they themselves even be brought in—once and for all, let them know it is for no bad motive, but because it is absolutely necessary for the work. Should they see themselves slightly changed, let them know that it is done simply to keep the whole circle, and so that outsiders should not recognize. We start, then, saying to every bad motive, “Absit.”

To-day was a play-day at the college, and now, at half-past three, was the visit made to the Blessed Sacrament. We, who are standing outside in the grounds on this November day, can hear the rise and fall of the organ, as if defying the blast outside, rising calm and peacefully, then sinking into a soft, low cadence, then bursting forth triumphantly into that grand old hymn, the “Lauda Sion.” The voices rise stern and triumphant, as

of soldiers who are trying to beat down some great enemy, and each trying to urge the other on to greater boldness. The last verse dies thrillingly away :

“Tu, qui cuncta scis et vales,
Qui nos pascis hic mortales,
Tuos ibi commensales,
Cohaeredes et sodales
Fac sanctorum civium.”

Then some father rose, and gave a few solemn words of warning, urging these young soldiers to cling to Him, “who, when clasp of loving hand and tender sound of loving voice shall fail, shall touch with his own strong, lasting light the feeble life that stretches up to Him ; and this when human love and tenderness are powerless to aid us more. Listen, children of earth : God calls you to a higher, holier, purer vocation ; seek in the ordinances of the Church the way to peace ; seek in prayer, tears, and penitence, to regain or to keep the purity bestowed upon you in your baptism.”

The words of dismissal were spoken, and the church-students, in their long, black cassocks, glided quietly from the chapel. Then followed the lay-students, and—

"The dim lamp softly burns,
And a wondrous silence reigns,
Nought but the sweet, low voice
Of the Holy One complains.
Long, long I've waited here,
And thou, thou heed'st not me;
The heart of God's own Son
Beats ever on for thee."

Two figures slowly pass from the door of the central entrance into the grounds. One is wrapping his gown around him to keep the cold away; the other is clad in a long black cloak, showing the difference between the schools. The first one is a deacon. The light, flaxen hair curls under his biretta; the clear-blue eyes and the fair complexion show off well under his black habiliments. A holy, childish expression nestles on his face, and the merry smile makes him a general favorite. He is about the middle height, and rejoices in the name of Paul Wright. His companion is in the divine's play-room, but he is of a darker complexion; a heavy expression falls over his face; his eyes are of a beautiful brown, and he has hair to match. He is also of the middle height, and, by his particular dress, the cloth of his cassock, and

his silk biretta, one would almost say he had gone in for the ecclesiastical nicety which all converts from ritualism consider correct. His name is Francis Carley. They saunter slowly about the grounds, and now the paths are well filled with strollers like themselves.

"Well, Frank, is he coming to-night?"

"Yes, *zio mio*. I heard from Father Ring this morning, asking me to do all I could for him."

"Shall you meet him, then, at the station?"

"Yes. I went up to the rector's room before visit; he also has heard, and he gave me the permission directly."

"How strange!"

"You know, Paul, old man, he comes from Oxford."

"Does he, Frank?"

"Yes, and he has suffered a good deal to become a Catholic. Last week a long account of his conversion was in the paper. I didn't see it, but I will look."

"Didn't I show you the father's letter, old boy?"

"No; do."

Francis Carley slowly pulled a letter from his

pocket, and handed it to Paul Wright. Let us glance over his shoulder at the contents :

“ ST. AUGUSTINE'S MONASTERY, LONDON, }
S. JOANNIS A CRUCE, *November 24th.* }

“ MY DEAR CHILD IN CHRIST : I have to ask you to do all in your power for Mr. Edward Lascine, a convert of one month, who is coming to St. Osmund's to-morrow. He is from Oxford, and has been staying in the monastery with us, but he thinks he would rather go to some college and see the Catholic world before he settles down to any order. I agree with him in his decision. Poor child ! he has much to suffer, both in the loss of friends and property ; so I have written to the fathers I know to do all they can for him to make him comfortable. Monsignore will doubtless allow you to meet him at the station by the seven P. M. train. He is gently born and bred, and I hope you will be great friends.

“ As for yourself, persevere in your holy vocation, remembering, ‘ Qui perseveraverit usque ad finem, hic salvus erit.’ Converse with the good God only, labor with him, walk with him, fight and suffer with him, and then you shall reign with him.

"Oh, what a holy vocation you are called to in the priesthood! I do not forget to ask God that you may continue in it in the Holy Sacrifice.

"Your affectionate father in Christ,

"THOMAS RING, O. S. A."

"Poor old fellow!" said Paul, as he handed back the letter, "I am sure I hope I shall like him."

"I hope I shall, too," said Carley.

"What a jolly name he has!"

"Yes, it is a pretty name—Edward Lascine."

"He has been a Puseyite, then?"

"Oh, yes, I suppose so."

"He must be a good sort of fellow, though, or Father Ring wouldn't write like that."

"What school will he be in, do you think, Paul?"

"Can't say."

"Well, then, I know the rector said the Poets', and he has No. 11 allotted in the Poets' Dormitory."

"No. 11 this cold weather, and after having luxuriant rooms at Oxford! It is a shame. We great, strong fellows can stand it, but not a stranger who has been gently brought up."

"So I suggested to the rector, but he said possibly things might be altered after he came."

"Is he under the prefect, then?"

"Why, yes, of course. Father Clare has *nous*; that is one thing. How laughable to put a fellow like that on the Poets' table! I shall watch to see how he elevates his basin of tea to-night."

"A fellow who has done and suffered what he has won't scruple at a thing like that, especially as he is going on for the priesthood. He, you may be sure, has learned 'how sublime a thing it is to suffer and be strong.'"

"Well, I must go in, as I have some work to do, and then dress to go to the station."

"And I, Frank, shall go to the chapel and pray for Edward Lascine, for he will suffer much, in first coming among us, from the rough ways of the Poets."

Two hours later saw Francis Carley on his way to the station. Two hours later saw Paul Wright kneeling in the chapel, still and motionless, his head buried in his hands, the folds of his gown falling gracefully around. Silence reigned, and in the dim twilight one could see kneeling forms adoring the All-Holy on his altar-throne. No light was

visible save the red lamps burning before the high altar, and in the niches before various saints. God grant, Paul Wright, your prayers may be heard for Edward Lascine, that he may always stand close to "Him who walketh in our midst so often, and whom we know not!"

More excitement than ordinary was visible in St. Augustine's Monastery to-day. Father Ring was hurrying backward and forward from the church to Edward Lascine's room. Now and then a bell rang, communicating from the church to the house, and the popular confessor, Father Ring, was demanded. The last time the bell rang, Father Ring said, very gently :

"Well, dear Edward, I must go now; in the mean time, you had best make a visit to all the fathers, as they have asked the father to allow it."

"As you would wish, dear Father Ring."

The voice came forth quiet and calm, but one could detect a touch of suffering in it beyond the ordinary.

Father Ring was gone.

Edward Lascine was kneeling at the foot of the crucifix, impressing burning kisses on the feet of the Crucified.

"O Jesu!" burst from his lips, "give, oh give me strength now to fight boldly under thy banner. I give myself to thee, O Christ! to be thy priest. Accept me, Jesu, accept me!"

Poor boy! The bowed head, and the terrible stillness, told far more truly than pen can describe what was passing.

Half an hour later he was in Father Denes's room. The good father was talking quietly and calmly with him on the decision he had come to of going to St. Osmund's.

"Gladly would we have kept you among us, Edward; you always have a room and a warm welcome here. Should St. Osmund's be too rough for you, come back to us. Be strong in the faith; Jesu will guide you, Mary our mother will pray for you, and we shall never forget you in the Holy Sacrifice. Take this book, a small token of affection from one who feels more than an ordinary interest in you."

An hour later Edward Lascine returned to his room perfectly laden with books and gifts, for every father has given him some little token of affection, besides kind words. A month only among these good fathers had wrought this. Some ter-

rible fascination must be working in this young fellow's character. Yes, gentle reader, there was a fascination in him—the fascination of real goodness.

Father Ring was waiting for him. Edward Lascine rushed to him ; his head was buried in the cassock of the man who had received him into the Church ; who had, as it were, cut him off from home, friends, every thing dear to him, and who yet loved him with unspeakable tenderness.

The good father's face was an index of his character. The simple, childish expression, the broad forehead, the thin, stern lips, the splendid figure, and the unutterable gentleness of the man, spoke worlds in his favor.

He had been an officer in the army for years, but always with the same quiet, gentlemanly bearing, talented, gifted ; he was a favorite with every one in the mess-room—his brother officers adored him. When, one day at mess, the place of Thomas Ring was vacant, and it was said he had gone to the Monastery of St. Austin, to become a monk and priest, no one wondered, no chaffing expression went the round of the table, and it was noticed that a gloominess prevailed for a day or so. Every one

among them admired that grand conception of "aliquid immensum infinitumque" which revolved in the mind of Thomas Ring, as in the mind of Cicero, and drew forth those splendid displays of genius which kept the table almost enrapt while he spoke, or, as the subject changed, in roars of laughter. And, later on, many an officer was seen in the monastery chapel, and often the calm discourses of the father have brought floods of tears to old, hardened, ruffian faces who for years had lived the lives whose endings one shudders to think of. The pure life of the man whom they had known so many years among them made them feel that every word came from his heart.

"Edward!"—Father Ring's voice was troubled, yet a wonderful tenderness rang through the calm tone—"Edward, our will is the only thing that we have of our own, and can offer to God. Offer Him yours now. This it is that makes the religious life so meritorious—the renouncement of the will at every moment, the continual death to all that has most life in us. Edward Lascine, think of the agony of Christ in the garden. Compare your suffering to his. How small it is! Edward, God loves you, therefore He makes you suffer."

"Father Vincent, I am strong now. It is only the parting with all the good fathers that troubles me. This house seems such a blessed home, such a shelter of refuge! Going to St. Osmund's seems like desolation!"

"When you proposed it, my child, I foresaw this; but I think it right you should go for a time, however painful it is to you and us, so that the world may not say you have not had liberty in your choice of life."

"It is best so, father."

"It is best. But you know the superior told you you have ever your home here, when you like to come; and you must come up often. I will see to that."

The voice was half choked that replied, "Thank you, father."

"Come, Edward, we must pack your numerous presents."

"Bien, mon père."

"And I, Edward, have given you no parting gift. Let me put this iron crucifix on your neck, the image of Him who gave Himself for you. They only are wise who love it, consult it, fathom it. Bitter as it is, nothing is so pleasing as to plunge

into the depths of its bitterness. It is a school wherein is to be found all knowledge without weariness, all sweetness without satiety. Found your house on the cross—you will fear neither wind, nor rain, nor storm.”

Edward Lascine’s voice was strong and firm as he replied, “Thank you, Father Vincent; I will do so.”

“And now, during the last half-hour we shall be together, let us go into the private chapel, and kneel before our Divine Lord, present in the ever-adorable sacrament of the altar. Let us intercede with Him who is all strong to strengthen you.”

Down through the long, winding passages and staircases passed the father and his charge, and there, in the great stillness, before the altar, they were kneeling.

Twenty minutes elapsed: two men came out of the chapel, with faces shining with holy joy—two beautiful faces, that will haunt me until death.

A lay brother came up.

“The cab is waiting, father.”

“We will be there in a few minutes.”

“Edward, are you strong to go forth, now?”

Edward Lascine pressed his hand on the iron

cross. "In His strength, dear father, yes. I feel, in some degree, as our Lord must have felt when the purple robe and crown of thorns fell from Him, when the last agony was over—nothing but Easter joy."

"Te deum laudamus, te dominum confitemur!" ejaculated the father. "Now, Edward, our parting must take place here. Remember, if ever you want money, if you want any thing, in fact, write to me, as you would have done to your own father or mother, and you shall have it."

Father Vincent leaned over him, and imprinted the pax on his cheek. "Now, my child, I will give you the Church's benediction.

Edward sank on his knees.

Clearly and softly rang through the stone corridor those words: "Benedicat te Omnipotens Deus, Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus."

They passed on to the door: the cab was waiting; the rain fell drearily enough, and the wind blew coldly.

Several fathers were standing there talking, and wishing to see Lascine once more.

"Dreary weather for you, poor child, to leave," said Father Austin.

"All is light here, though," said he, once more pressing his hands on the crucifix.

Father Vincent smiled a sad, dim smile; the pax was given all round; once more sweet words of blessing; then the sound of departing wheels, and Edward Lascine had left the Catholic home which had sheltered him since his conversion, going forth among strangers, and to rough hardships with the joy of one of the old martyrs of old. The brilliantly-lighted station, the ticket-office, all seemed a dream to him; he was thinking of the farewell, and pressing the iron cross to his bosom. Poor child! the cross in time will press hard enough, without pressing it there. God help thee under thy coming burdens!

CHAPTER IV.

QUID EST ERGO PULCHRUM ? ET QUID EST PULCHRITUDO ?

"Amabam pulchra inferiora et ibam in profundum, et dicebam amicis meis : Num amamus aliquid nisi pulchrum ? Quid est ergo pulchrum ? et quid est pulchritudo ? Quid est quod nos allicit et conciliat rebus quas amamus ? Nisi enim esset in eis decus et species, nullo modo nos ad se moverent. . . . Et ista consideratio scaturivit in animo meo ex intimo corde meo, et scripsi libros."—S. AUGUSTINI, *Episcop. Confess.*, lib. iv., 20.

THE rain and the wind were no pleasant companions to Francis Carley as he walked over the hills to Brill to meet Edward Lascine at the station. He was a good fellow in himself, but oceans of low cunning mixed into his composition. He had a pleasant, witty way with him, and this floated him over much, and caused students to like his company.

"Well, I hope this fellow will be decent, after this deucedly unpleasant walk. What a fuss mon-

signore made about him, sending the cart with James down for his luggage, and saying we might ride back ! No fear, monsignore. We shall see who wins. He shall walk back with me, and, although I don't see him by this light, by his conversation I shall know exactly what he is like. Don't I envy his dormitory neither, ha, ha, ha ! I'll do what I can for him, however, if he is nice ; if he isn't, I shall soon wash my hands of him."

This was the mental soliloquy of Francis Carley during his walk, broken by the dog-cart coming over the hill for the luggage.

"James !"

"Yis, Muster Carley."

"Take Mr. Lascine's luggage and get home immediately, and send the luggage up to his room. I shall walk with him."

"Yis, sur."

"James, here's half a crown for you."

"Thank 'ee, sur. I'll do what he sez."

"All right, James. Good-night."

"Hain't gort much toime, sur."

"All right, James. Good-night."

"Good-noight, sur."

Once more alone, Mr. Carley walked quicker,

contemplating still on the new-comer. "At all events, I shall have something to do in arranging his wardrobe. I must see the tailor about his cassock, and he must wear the Roman biretta, so that the fellows see converts know how to have things *comme il faut*. Is he rich, though? Ah, that I haven't heard! How the rain cuts over this hill! Well, he ought to like a fellow for tumbling out on such a night. How interested Paul Wright is in him—good old fellow, going to chapel and praying for him! I wish I could be like Paul—always the same calm holiness about his manner. He must really love our Lord, or he wouldn't be like that.—By Jove! there's the train in the distance. Well, I must run. I've only got about three hundred yards to go."

"Hur hain't hin, Muster Carley," said James.

"All right, James; here I am, you see."

"Wet through, sur?"

"No, James, not quite."

The train steamed into the miserably-lit station, and three passengers alighted. One aged lady. "This isn't him," said Frank. A middle-aged man, with whiskers. "Should have to shave that bird; hope that isn't him." A tall, slight figure,

in an Ulster, and high hat. "All right," said Frank. "That's him."

"You for the college, sir?" said the porter.

"Yes. Is any one here for my luggage?"

"Man, sir."

"Send him here, please, as I cannot hold all these small packages and wraps, and look after my luggage."

Frank Carley now came forward under the gas-lamp. Edward saw his Roman collar and ecclesiastical coat, and caught a glimpse of his face. A cold thrill passed through his body, but he pressed the iron crucifix to him, and said, "I will like him for God's sake."

"Mr. Lascine, I believe," said Frank.

"Are you Mr. Carley, one of Father Ring's converts?"

"Yes, I am."

"Well, then, we can shake hands, as our new life begins from the same origin."

"May I hold those things for you?"

"Oh, yes, if you will kindly do so; and I will look after the luggage."

In a few moments the train had gone on, the luggage was placed in the cart, and Edward Las-

cine and Frank Carley were on their way to the college.

"How long have you been received, Mr. Lascine?"

"Only a month; and to me it seems only one long day of joy. But please drop that odious 'Mr.' to my name, and call me 'Lascine.'"

"I hope you will apply the same remark to mine," said Carley.

"Certainly. Have you been long at the college?"

"Oh, yes; nearly a year."

"You like it, I suppose?"

"Well, I hardly know. Most of the fellows are rather rough, and are of poor parentage. Some dozen or so are nice, and the lay students are nice; but then, one never hardly sees them."

"I am glad the fellows are of poor parentage. Our Lord's disciples were poor, and yet they founded the mighty Church of which we are children."

Carley was silent.

"Father Ring sent some kind messages to you, which I may as well give now." And Edward went on to say all that Father Ring had told him.

Carley suddenly asked, "Are you on the funds?"

Edward's tone was very constrained as he said :
"What are the funds? I am sure I don't know."

"Glad you don't. But, allow me to inform you, I am not on the funds."

"In the first place, Carley, I don't know what the funds are ; and, in the second place, I care as little."

"Well, then, Lascine, does any bishop pay your pension?"

Had this question been asked Edward Lascine eight weeks ago, he would have knocked the questioner down. Now he simply said :

"If you mean, do I pay myself for being at the college, I do. But let us change the subject."

In his heart of hearts Carley shouted, "Hurrah ! then I shall make him have a cloth cassock like mine, and a silk biretta."

"Isn't this an awful hill?"

"Yes, it is rather. But, Carley, you are getting wet ; come under my umbrella."

"Thanks, I will, for sociability's sake, but not because I fear the wet."

"Tell me, Carley, what is Monsignore Witton like?"

"Oh, a jolly little man—spectacles—aged coat

—given to feeding—very holy—good voice—sings well—hear him sing high mass on president's days—last notes dying swan fool to it.”

“My dear Carley, please do not take superiors off before me. I like a joke amazingly, but I believe superiors to be set over us by God.”

“Very likely I am wrong; but I am so used to chaffing I hardly know when I do chaff.”

“What is the prefect like?”

Oh, very nice—Father Clare—no relation to Father Clare, Jesuit, at Farm Street—handsome—good—universally liked—regular brick—most fellows in our school like him.”

“Father Ring thinks a good deal of him.”

“Sure to—same disposition—happy—cheerful—holy—can't help being friends.”

Conversation like this carried them on to the college. By this time they were in the grounds, and soon at the grand entrance in the centre of the building.

“Light in chapel, you see—confession-night—every one obliged to go to confession to-night—good rule—every one goes to holy communion to-morrow—here's the door—can't see new home to-

night—to-morrow morning—plenty of time—so you will say one year hence.”

“Don’t know, Carley; not much given to change myself; and I came here to work, not to humbug.”

“I try to work a good deal, but often I feel so lazy I can’t.”

“Why don’t you grasp one idea? Look beyond the narrow limits of earth to the scenes of that eternal world to which you are going, and ever aim to do that which will promote your best interests ten thousand years hence, when all the honors and riches of earth shall have vanished away.”

“Mayhap, Lascine; but I am too lazy.”

“Laziness ought never to be named in connection with one who aspires to the Christ-like office you aspire to.”

As Lascine said this, they entered the central door, passed through the entrance-hall into the large corridor sweeping the whole length of the central building. At the far end stood the altar of the Blessed Virgin, with the everlasting light gleaming brightly. A tradition of S. Osmund’s.

Carley hastened on through the dimly-lighted

stone corridor, telling Lascine to follow, up a staircase to the next gallery, where some seventy young men were walking backward and forward, waiting to go to confession.

A quiet look at Lascine was all, as Carley hastened him on through another corridor, then to a broad gallery, and, passing along, opened the door of an elegantly-furnished room, bedroom, and sitting-room all in one. A pale-green paper on the walls, a few good pictures of divers saints, a large crucifix over the bed, and in a recess a statue of the Virgin Mother, with a lamp burning, and costly exotics in vases by the side, two easy-chairs, with some light cane-side chairs, a bookcase well stored with books, costly mantel ornaments, simply arranged, but the *tout ensemble* light and elegant.

"Welcome to St. Osmund's, Mr. Edward Lascine! I am right glad my room first shelters you. Have a rest in that chair. Stay, let me assist you with that coat."

Edward Lascine sank into his chair. Francis Carley took stock of him. His conclusions were evidently good. Let me now introduce Edward Lascine to my readers.

As he emerges from the great-coat, one sees an

elegant figure, clad in the *négligé* elegance of Pool's establishment when it does the best good cutters can do. Rather above the middle height, broad across the shoulders, but with the figure almost of a woman; the trousers, nearly black, falling over the small feet, the double-breasted riding-coat showing off to perfection his figure; the face pale, the features at first seeming to one irregular, until you studied the profile well, then you were struck with the expression and the broad, high forehead; the hair, almost black, contrasted strangely with the bright-blue eyes and the long, light lashes falling over them, the clear, delicate complexion showing off the contrast between the eyes and the hair, and making you recognize it against your will; the lips firm and good, no heavy, sensual expression resting over them, and, when he laughed, the regular white teeth shone out, and made his face really handsome. The nose was the only thing one could cavil about. Some said it was a shade too large; others said it was just enough out of the aquiline to give expression to the face. The small hands, almost hidden in the large white cuffs, were evidently inherited from Maude Treven, now Mrs. Lascine.

Francis Carley was struck with his appearance as he sat, with his knees crossed, gazing into the fire—no ornament visible, not even a watch-chain or ring ; but, looking at him, one would have said, “He is a gentleman born and bred.”

He laughed a low, musical laugh at something Carley said, and gave back some witty reply, which spoke of a gay, joyous temper ; and yet that temper was but the sparkle and foam at the surface : below it one felt there were depths of earnest tenderness, which demonstrated the truth of the old epigram, that “tears are akin to laughter.”

“Will you wash first, Lascine ?”

“No, thanks, I am enjoying the fire just now ; besides, you have more to do to put on your cassock and that swell biretta.”

Carley blushed. This didn’t look like the silk biretta and cloth cassock ; however, he replied, “All serene, *sans façon*.”

Lascine took up a book, and commenced reading, until Carley informed him it was time to wash.

“Is my traveling-bag here, Carley ?”

“I will fetch it in a minute. I beg pardon.”

Carley left the room. Edward Lascine sank on

his knees, his face buried in his hands, with the iron crucifix pressed to his lips.

When Carley entered with the bag, Lascine had quite finished his toilet. Clean boots and clean cuffs were soon added, and the beautiful hair brushed back from the high forehead. Carley felt proud of him as he said :

“We had best go to the rector.”

“With pleasure.”

At last they came to the rector's room.

A knock. “Come in !” called out a quiet voice.

In a moment they were in the presence of Monsignore Witton.

A high, stately apartment, simply furnished, with windows opening upon a balcony. Two candles burning only. No fire, cold as it was ; for Monsignore Witton was a man who believed in self-denial.

“Pardon, monsignore, I have brought Mr. Lascine.

Monsignore Witton came forward into the light, and one saw a pale, emaciated face, a little emaciated form, clad in a serge cassock, with a black-serge rope tied round his waist, and a small skull-cap on his head.

Intensely kind was the little man's way as he welcomed Edward Lascine. His heart seemed touched by what he knew of Mr. Lascine.

"God grant you may be happy among us!" he said; "and, if you have any thing to complain of, come to me." He made them take a chair each, and conversed about ten minutes. Then he said: "I am sorry I cannot give you more time to-night, but people are waiting for me in the confessional. Mr. Carley must make you comfortable, and I hope to see you to-morrow after the high mass."

"I thank you, monsignore."

"God bless you!" and the tears welled up in the eyes of monsignore as he turned to go to the confessional.

Frank Carley breathed freer when he got outside.

"Now," said he, "for the prefect, Father Clare."

Up another long corridor—to the right, to the left—and, in a different wing, they came to the door of the prefect's room.

Carley knocked. A cheery voice cried, "Come in!"

They were in the presence of the prefect. A

tall, handsome man, of from five-and-twenty to five-and-thirty, coal-black hair and dark-brown eyes, a clear complexion and firm, thin lips, with the aquiline profile that a painter would have gloried in.

On studying his face, one read immediately in the expression a love for the beautiful. Those words entirely describe the man. The black hair was carelessly thrown back from the forehead; the long, black cassock fell over an almost skeleton form.

Edward Lascine looked at him, and felt he loved him; so much of God shone out in his face, that one felt, indeed, his body was the temple of the Holy Ghost.

He was sitting at a table covered with books.

In a clear, soft voice, he said: "Good-evening, Mr. Carley. Has the new student come?"

Carefully looking up, his eye rested on the elegant form of Lascine. He seemed almost surprised. The new student was certainly different from what he expected.

"Good-evening, Mr. Lascine. I am glad to welcome you to St. Osmund's." He rose, and extended his hand warmly to Edward.

"Thank you, Father Clare."

Their hands met; their eyes met; their very souls seemed to have met; and from that moment Father Clare and Edward Lascine were firm friends.

"I am afraid you will find us intolerably dull here after Oxford and the fathers at St. Augustine's."

"I don't think so, Father Clare. I have met with a very kind reception, and then one is never lonely so long as one has the chapel to go to, and plenty of books."

"Each school has its library; so you will have plenty of books."

"Will you please excuse me, Father Clare, as I have to go to my tutor to explain my absence to-night from schools?"

"Yes, Mr. Carley; but you will please return in ten minutes."

Carley left.

Father Clare broke the silence: "Have you been a Catholic long?"

"One month only, but a very happy month."

"Father Ring received you, did he not?"

"Yes, Father Clare. I have an immensely high

opinion of Father Ring. I had met him some time ago in town, at some mutual friends', but I never spoke of religion to a Catholic priest until a week before my conversion."

"How strange! You found out Catholicism for yourself, then?"

"Yes; but it is not a great step from High Churchism. Father Ring laughed, and said he had no instruction to give, only to receive me."

"What made you first think of Catholicism?"

"St. Austin is lying on your table, Father Clare, he can best answer that for me. If you turn to the 'Confessions' of St. Austin, you will find in the fourth book and twentieth exactly what made me a Catholic. I was always asking myself, 'Quid est ergo pulchrum? et quid est pulchritudo?' I found it placed in God. Then I took up the whole question from the commencement. I studied antiquity, I read all manner of books, to endeavor to find God's Church. I studied hard in the 'long,' instead of traveling, and, after diligent search, I found that which I was in quest of—God's Church. My soul bathes itself in the beautiful there, because it bathes in God. Oh, how truly St. Austin spoke when he said, 'Our hearts were

made for Thee, O God, and they shall never rest until they rest in Thee ! ' ”

Father Clare's eyes were moist with tears, as he said, “ God grant you always this joy, ”

Frank Carley entered at this moment, and, as he did so, the supper-bell rang.

“ Father Clare, shall I take Mr. Lascine to the house-keeper's room for supper to-night ? ”

“ I think, if Mr. Lascine does not mind, he had best come to the refectory, and commence to see and know us at once. ”

“ I would rather, Father Clare. ”

“ Shall he come to our table to-night ? ”

“ No, Mr. Carley ; he had best go to his own. But I must go to marshal the lower schools through the corridor to the refectory.—Mr. Lascine, I shall hope to see you to-night after Benediction.—Mr. Carley, you will bring him to me. ” And Father Clare took up his keys and hurried through the corridor.

“ To-morrow I should advise you to ask Monsignore Witton to allow you to come into a higher school—that is, into our play-room. The Poets are simply boys ; it's a shame to stick you with them, and I am sure monsignore did not know what you were like, or he wouldn't have put you there. ”

"I don't mind, Carley."

"Yes, but you will, though. Imagine a table without cloth—bare, dirty oak—an old soup-plate, with a lump of butter and an enormous basin of milk-and-water. My dear, you will be so disgusted you will never survive; and then, to crown all, you will have a young quarter of a loaf of bread handed to you."

"*Cela se peut-il, Carley, j'ai beaucoup de peine à le croire.*"

"*Donc, mon cher Lascine. Allons voir.*"

CHAPTER V.

A NEW LIFE.

"I love the high embowered roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced choir below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may, with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into extasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes."
"IL PENSIEROSO" (MILTON).

DOWN-STAIRS Carley swiftly passed, and joined the troops of Divines who were now hastening onward into the refectory. As Carley passed Paul Wright, he quietly introduced him to Lascine. Among fifty fellows a great many must naturally be nice. Paul's face wore its most fascinating smile to-night. All his hopes of Lascine—what he was like, how he was dressed—every thing was to his satisfac-

tion, but more still his fancy was taken with the calm look of holiness on his face.

Father Clare came up to Lascine when he arrived in the refectory. "I am sorry to part you from Carley, but this is your place on the Poets' table."

All eyes were turned on the new-comer, but he calmly met their gaze, neither blushing nor feeling uncomfortable.

Among the hundred and forty students, silence reigned as Father Clare asked the benediction.

Solemnly his voice fell :

V. Benedicite. R. Deus.

Benedic Domine nos, et hæc tua dona, quæ de tua largitate sumus sumpturi. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Kyrie, eleison ; Christe, eleison ; Kyrie, eleison. Pater-noster (etc., secreto).

V. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem. R. Sed libera nos a malo.

Mensæ cœlestis participes faciat nos Rex æternæ gloriæ. Amen.

Edward Lascine gazed down the table. It was as Carley had said—no cloth, oak table, soup-plate, butter on plate, and, to crown all, the enormous

basin of milk-and-water. A half-checked smile stole over his face, but fortunately no one perceived it, and he was too well-bred to show disgust. Dim visions rose before him of the luxurious college-rooms, and he imagined Oxonians looking at him then, sitting on that form, with the enormous hunch of bread on his plate. Carley enjoyed it immensely. Once he looked round and grinned, but, seeing his grinning had no effect, he subsided. After some calculation how to convey the enormous bowl of milk to his mouth, Edward Lascine managed to drink, and to induce a knife, in the last stages of bluntness, to officiate. He then gazed at the fellows at his table. The Poets had rather a good school in then, which he was to join. However, he endeavored to read their faces, and came to the conclusion that he had not fallen among such a bad lot after all. The ludicrousness only of the position struck him. It was like leaving Oxford, and retiring to some low form at Eton. Silence was the rule during supper, except on play-days. At ordinary times, the life of some saint was read by the lector.

After the supper was over, Paul Wright and Frank Carley came up to Lascine, and asked him

to stroll into the lower corridor. Pictures covered the walls, and at the far end the lights were burning on the altar of Mary Most Holy, and the Divines were already walking up and down, saying the rosary, two-and-two. It was a strange sight to see these young fellows, all so earnest. This corridor was given only to the Divines, and, to Edward's great delight, the under schools had disappeared, Poets included. Paul and he were soon in an animated conversation, and by degrees the other Divines came round and joined in; then a visit to the play-room and library. How droll that word play-room sounds to our ears who have been brought up Protestants, and educated at Eton or Rugby! Yet, in our Catholic colleges, play-rooms exist for young fellows of eighteen to twenty-four. A pleasant rendezvous for a wet day, what with the bagatelle and billiard-tables, and the books; then the amusing discussions in the small groups; and, to crown all, on those cheerless winter-days, the blazing fire leaping up mirthfully from its large grate, as if it reveled in the innocent amusements of the inhabitants of that dear old room.

I search the long galleries of my mind for the amusements buried in the past, and always there

rises up that happy old time spent in the play-room of St. Osmund's; calm and joyous that time stands out, and, seen in its light, how meagre look the stately club-house amusements of our mighty London, Paris, and continental towns! Although buried in them now, St. Osmund's rises up as a pale rainbow over the world of fashion, and I act on that light, and many a pitfall it has saved my aching feet from falling into.

The professors coming out from their refectory, interested by Monsignore Witton's description of Edward Lascine, came round and sought him out, and were surprised to hear the good opinion all the Divines seemed to have formed of him.

"What a pity," said Robert Weed (a strong, healthy fellow, the life of all the games), "Edward Lascine is in the Poets!"

Father Gray smiled. "It will be altered to-morrow, I should think," he said.

"Do you use your influence, Father Gray," said Edmund Ede.

"What a noble fellow Lascine seems!" said Decan, joining the group. "Imagine a fellow, young like him, giving up two hundred a year to become a Catholic. Handsome rooms at Oxford,

Carley says, and his own home. It appears that his parents will have nothing to do with him since his conversion."

"All that is true," replied Father Gray. "I received this morning a note from Father Ring, in which he says he has never known a case in which such harshness has been used. His mother and the whole household are forbidden to write to him, and all his home communications will be burnt without reading. A mere pittance of fifty or sixty pounds has been assigned him, to be paid through a lawyer, quarterly. The fathers at St. Augustine's would willingly have kept him there, but it seems he has chosen to come here to finish his studies of his own free-will.

"I tell you what it is, Father Gray," said De-can, "these converts shame us old Catholics."

"Too often, I am afraid. But I wish you all to do what you can to make Lascine comfortable and happy."

"Father Gray, you don't wish to insult the Divines' room by asking such a question, do you?" said Ede, laughing.

"I can trust the children of St. Osmund," replied Father Gray, in the same bantering tone.

The clock in the church-tower sounded nine. Immediately the bells rang joyously for the benediction service and night prayer.

The silence-bell rang in the corridor.

Edward Lascine was still with Paul Wright.

"I must tell you the meaning of this bell," said Paul. "After that has rung, every one is silent until after meditation and holy mass, to-morrow. To-night I am going to show you to a place in chapel; you can keep it to-morrow and for the services, until your place is given out by the prefect."

Father Irving, the vice-rector, passed just then, on his way to the church.

"The silence-bell has rung, Mr. Wright."

"Yes, sir. I was explaining its meaning to Mr. Lascine."

The vice-rector started, and extended his hand to Edward.

"Welcome to St. Osmund's, Mr. Lascine! I shall hope to have the pleasure of seeing you in my rooms to-morrow. Good-night; and, for the future, remember the silence-bell."

As he passed on, Paul said: "You will like him much. But now we must observe the rules. Good-night, too, although I sit next you during

benediction. I have to thank you for 'one more very happy sun strung on my bead of days.' "

Edward smiled, as he shook hands warmly. "I suppose the silence-bell reminded you of that; but I don't take it as a compliment, because I know the first lines :

" 'When night comes, list thy deeds ; make plain the way
'Twixt heaven and thee ; block it not with delay.
But perfect all before thou sleep'st, and say,
There's one more sun strung on my bead of days.' "

"And then," said Paul, smiling his most fascinating smile, "'what's good, score up for joy.' That means my coming across you, eh ? "

As he said this they arrived at the church-door, and, as they glided to their places in the stalls, the calm voice of Father Clare commenced the night prayers.

In the dim chapel one could just see Edward Lascine's face was buried in his hands.

In the Monastery of St. Augustine, also, in the private chapel, with the massive velvet curtains shutting out all sound, in the dim light glimmering from the sanctuary lamp, one could just distinguish a motionless form, kneeling in the lowliest

devotion, the head resting on the hands buried in the heavy monk's hood.

It was Father Ring, praying for the welfare of Edward Lascine ; imploring, at God's high throne, strength and final perseverance to bear that cross boldly which he had taken up in all love and confidence.

May God hear those prayers which rise to-night !

Was Edward Lascine praying ? Did he hear the calm tones of Father Clare's voice ? Did he perceive the sacristan lighting the tapers at the high altar ? I know not. Many as were the glances thrown across the chapel to where he was kneeling, his very posture bespeaking unutterable devotion ; and, from looking at him, one seemed to catch a spirit of devotion equal to his ; and, from simply gazing at him, many a head was bowed in lowly supplication for him.

The chapel was brilliantly illuminated now ; the gas was blazing in the untenanted places of the white choir. The high altar was bright with its starry tapers, and the rare exotics threw their faint, odorous scent over the chapel. Surely the angels in heaven joyed over such a sight as this.

The sweet, boyish faces in the lower stalls, clad in their black cassocks, and the young men in the upper stalls, with their breviaries open, reverently reciting the divine office—young souls who had given and devoted their whole lives to the Lord. Beautiful, holy life! Surely, indeed, these are those virgin souls who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth in the lordly, ancestral halls of heaven.

Father Clare's voice had ceased. The solemn swell of the magnificent organ in the rood broke the silence. Solemn and low the sweet notes rose in a hymn of triumph, seemingly heard far away over some distant hill, speaking of the battle finished, and the return of the warriors to claim their reward. Clearer and nearer it seemed to come, borne on by the glad feet of the conquerors, now echoing and almost dying away in some far ravine, then bursting forth more joyously and louder, until the chapel seemed to ring again with heaven's own melodies. Then, to a full march of triumph, one saw coming slowly through the gloom of the ante-chapel the white choir. Now they wind under the rood, and advance slowly to the foot of the altar, genuflect, and part on each side, while the

officiating priests pass on to the altar-steps. When Edward Lascine raised his head, the All-Holy Sacrament was raised on the Altar Throne, and the "O Salutaris" was ringing through the chapel, sung with the devotion and appreciation with which only a college-choir can sing. One could call him handsome now, if one caviled at his appearance before. The calm face aglow with religious fervor, the gas shining over his rich, blue-black hair, and the exquisite complexion contrasting with it, and the eyes turned to the altar with a look of the deepest love, gazing on that most fearful mystery which draws so many hearts, bound against will, to the Catholic Church.

Time, place, every thing, were forgotten, except that he was kneeling alone there with God. Mark him well, gentle reader, now. Let this image of him sink into your souls, for you will see him in other and more exciting circumstances; but here only will you gather the secret of his strength.

A feast of the Virgin Mother to-day; and, as the last line of the "O Salutaris" dies away, the grand tones of the Mother's song ("The Magnificat") burst through the chapel.

Paul Wright raised his head and listened in-

tently as he heard the liquid, tenor tones chording by his side. It seemed as if the whole soul of the man breathed in the tones, "*Et exultavit spiritus meus, in Deo Salutari meo.*" Father Clare heard those tones, and gazed at Edward Lascine, who unconsciously continued that holy song of gladness as his whole soul drank in the beauty of the words. What to him now was the loss of home, family, friends, every thing? What, indeed? Had he not found a securer home—a more watchful care? Was not God his father, Mary his mother, the Church his home, the sacraments his sustenance? What wanted he more? One thing—I will tell it you: final perseverance. For it is written by one whose words fail not, "*Qui perseveraverit usque ad finem, hic salvus erit.*"

Father Clare saw it—saw it, trembled, and prayed.

As the benediction was given, many, many prayers went up for the new-comer. For the circumstances in which he came among them had touched all hearts. I love to linger over that first evening he came among us. It rises up in my mind with all the beauty of a clear, starlight night after the burning heat of a hot summer's day.

Carley was waiting by the church-door as Lascine left.

He whispered, quietly : "I waited to take you to Father Clare's room, and to say good-night."

And they passed on, without another word, to Father Clare's room, and waited for him.

He came at last, the keys of the many classrooms and the study-place in his hands. They heard him walking slowly toward them through the corridors ; the step seemed tired and slow ; but, as he entered, and threw the keys on the table, and saw Edward Lascine and Carley, the weary expression passed from his face, and he took off his great Roman cloak, and threw it lightly over his chair. As Carley shivered visibly, he said :

"What, Mr. Carley, shivering to-night ?"

"Yes. I find it cold, Father Clare, even in my cloak."

"It is well we suffer cold and pain sometimes. The great Master did so from his birth. Thank God we suffer these things. They are the rounds of the ladder by which we climb to heaven."

"What did you think of the benediction to-night ?" asked Carley of Lascine.

"The music is beautiful ; but the church of St.

Augustine's Monastery seems warmer to me than the college-chapel. One has all the difference of Roman and Gothic, you see. But I shall like this chapel, after a time, better, I imagine. Gothic is cold this weather. But, as long as one has our Lord there, the chapel matters little."

"The Oxford chapels are Gothic, are they not, Mr. Lascine?"

"Yes, Father Clare, that is the prevailing architecture."

"I have long wished to go there to visit the old Catholic foundation colleges."

"You would visit a great many then, Father Clare. But we are not so far behind there, now, in Catholicism. We have Archbishop Laud's statue of Our Lady and the Holy Child over the university church-door, and all the E. C. V. men touch their hats as they pass. Then, at the churches of St. Thomas, and Cowley St. John, they have good doctrine taught."

"Have you seen much of Dr. Pusey?"

"He was my confessor-extraordinary for several months. He is a kind, good old man, and I have not any fault to find with him. He led me

on to the very threshold of the Catholic Church, and stopped me at the supremacy of Peter."

"Did your other confessor help you over that?"

"No; but I was staying in Essex, with some high Puseyites, and I came across Allies's book, 'St. Peter, his Name and his Office.' That decided me."

"And Father Enson, your Puseyite confessor and director?"

"He argued, and raved, and stormed, and finally telegraphed to Father Ring I was 'mad.'"

(Carley, excitedly :) "And what did Father Ring do?"

"The telegram was sent to my people; they returned it in a blank envelope; then the father-superior wrote to Mr. Enson, saying that, unless he immediately apologized, and retracted every thing he said, he should place the matter in the hands of his lawyer."

"And what answer came?"

"A full apology. But let us change the conversation—I do not care to talk about myself." And, as Lascine said this, a pained expression passed over his face. Father Clare saw it—Carley was ignorant of it.

"Let me ask you a few more questions, may I?"

Lascine bit his under lip, and made a great effort to appear calm as he answered Carley in one word: "Certainly, Mr. Carley."

"Did you know any Queen's men?"

"A few."

"Was Paley in your clique?"

"No; but I have met him."

"Will you tell me who was in your clique?"

Lascine's face flushed at this impertinent examination; but he still answered Carley calmly: "Yes. My chums were mostly Christ's Church and Johnians, one Oriel man, an Exeter man or so, and a Skimmery man, also two or three Magdalen (Maudlin) fellows. If you know any one in those places, I shall be most glad to tell you if they were friends of mine."

"Did you know 'Lothair'?"

Edward Lascine thought of old times, and calmly answered, "He has been to my rooms."

Father Clare had been calmly reading Lascine through and through as he sat silent during this conversation. He saw the effort made by Lascine to sustain it, and came to the rescue.

"I am sorry, Mr. Carley, to disturb you, but

the vice-rector passed me in the corridor, and told me not to keep you more than twenty minutes. I see the time is up now."

"Father Irving is severe just now."

"Father Irving is always just," laughingly returned Father Clare.

"Then I must go. Good-night, Father Clare; good-night, Mr. Lascine."

Father Clare and Edward Lascine were alone.

The silence was broken by Father Clare commencing a conversation on classics.

"You have read Virgil?"

"Yes."

"All?"

"Yes."

"Horace's satires?"

"Yes."

"'Ars Poëtica?'"

"Yes, Father Clare. I took a fancy to learn off, line by line, the 'Ars Poëtica.'"

"Do you remember this sentence: 'Quæsitum est carmen laudabile fieret natura an arte: ego video nec [quid] studium prosit, sine divite vena, necquid ingenium rude, sic altera res poscit opem alterius et conjurat amice.'"

"I remember it, Father Clare. It begins at the four hundred and ninth line."

"And what is your opinion of it?"

"I should say the poem worthy of praise was made by Nature, independent of art; but the ideas might be rendered in a more refined manner by the conjunction of art with Nature."

"And do you believe that a poem might be written by an uncultivated man, independent of art?"

"Decidedly. If the rich vein lay buried there, any great sorrow would bring it to the surface."

"I am glad you take my idea of the subject."

"I tell you one thing, Father Clare, I am immensely ignorant of the Roman pronunciation of Latin. I wish you would give me some idea of it. It seems so odd, after our Oxford pronunciation. I shall be quite ashamed to attend the classes."

"Well, we can soon remedy that. It is only an affair of a few minutes."

Father Clare went to his bookcase, and took down two volumes: one he gave to Lascine, and the other he kept. And steadily and surely this first lesson progressed. When it was finished, the priest said:

"Mr. Lascine, I will advise you in one thing as

a friend. Go to Monsignore Witton, tell him candidly you would like to go in the Divines' room, that you have been used to have your own rooms in college, and be under a comparatively light rule to ours. Really, I think the Poets' will be too strict. You must always walk out in parties, with a master. You will be in the bounds, liable to penances from the upper schools—that is, the Divines and Philosophers. I do not think your health would stand it. The Poets' dormitory is very cold, too, and a great change from luxurious rooms. You must not tamper with your health, and, in your case, I consider it a necessity that you go in the Divines'."

"Does it not look like shrinking from suffering, Father Clare?"

"You have enough, Mr. Lascine, without that. I also will speak to Monsignore Witton for you."

"But, then, I cannot join the schools, can I? Father Ring thought it would be necessary."

"Monsignore Witton may probably make that objection. Should he do so, I will take you myself. I have now two private pupils, and you can join the class and do the same work with them."

"That may be, Father Clare. It is intensely

good of you, but it may entail more expense than I can afford just now. Remember, my allowance has degenerated to fifty pounds a year, all of which, I believe, I have to pay to the college."

"You and myself will not quarrel about a few pounds, I think. Will you accept my offer to aid you as a friend?" Father Clare held out his hand to Lascine; Edward grasped it warmly. In etiquette an offer so delicately made could not be refused without rudeness. "Will you put me under obligation by telling me about the Bodleian and Ashmoleum Libraries?"

"Willingly," and the whole conversation turned on Oxford, her libraries and museums, and the college rules and lectures, until twelve o'clock.

"Really, Mr. Lascine, you have kept me so pleasantly engaged that I had forgotten the lapse of time. Well, we must part. I apologize for keeping you so long. You have not seen your room yet. I will show you to it."

Father Clare took his keys, crossed the corridor, and, opening a door, passed into the Poets' gallery. The rooms extended on either hand, and the door of one was open. "That is your room," said Father Clare, as he put down the candle, and

turned up the gas. "In a few days you will get a better room, but this is the best I can do for you now. Good-night," and the priest raised up his hand and blessed him.

While Lascine is at his portmanteau, let us examine the room.

A simple bed with straw mattress, carpetless floor, wash-hand stand, and a chest of drawers, and on the wall a crucifix—nothing more. But in a few minutes the room looked different. Edward Lascine took from his portmanteau, and placed on the drawers, a figure of our Lord scourged at the pillar, an exquisitely-painted Munich figure, the great cords cutting into the hands, the blood pouring forth, the face of the God-man sad, sorrowful, blood-stained, and weary, the blue eyes tear-stained, the crown of thorns biting into his brow, from whence the bloody sweat flowed over the hair. And the great blue marks of the scourging on the sacred shoulders seemed life-like in the truth of the flesh-hue, while over the sacred body fell a crimson mantle lined with gold, from which the bare feet protruded. Now, two lighted candles of purest wax, placed in delicate brass candlesticks, were burning before the statue. Why this external

symbolism? Wait a few moments. Next from the portmanteau came a steel discipline, and the seven thongs were stained with blood. Wait, I can tell you more; a scene rises before me of a kneeling figure, the sharp strokes of the discipline's steel chains falling on human flesh, and a moaning voice of agony, pleading to a God-man for strength to bear bravely a heavy cross — words of deep pleading, at which all heaven's bright throng shouted for joy before the Crucified: "Lord Jesus, give me strength, help me to follow in thy blood-stained path. Lord Jesu, help, now that I need it most!" and strength was given according to his day.

CHAPTER VI.

OXFORD—CHRIST CHURCH.

OXFORD, mighty old city, glorious Shrine of St. Frideswide, one of Old England's many crowns, how dear art thou to many a heart! There the life-friendships are formed; and, through life, the remembrances of thine alumni cling to thee. Flourish on, dear old city! flourish ever, Mother of Youth! Flourish on, thou seat of learning, and send out still, as thou hast done, many a strong brain and heart, fully fitted to grapple with life's hard lessons!

How many happy remembrances crowd over me as I write thy name! "The High," "the old rooms in Christ Church," "the loving, youthful faces of my youth, of my young life's friendship." And still from those embers of the fast-burning fire of the past rise high and noble aspirations, lofty

and holy thoughts. Standing on the mountain-summit of life, we gaze down into its valleys—how distant they appear!—and we wonder how we have gained the summit; the broad valleys, the deep ravines, the rushing chasms, the streams—how we have passed all this—how stand we where we are! I know not; but I love to dream and think it is through St. Fridewide's protection, and the education given within the cathedral limits of the bright old city of Oxford.

The morning sun was gleaming over the "quods" of Christ Church, and lighting up the windows of the cathedral. The clear, deep light of autumn in England. A bracing wind was blowing, just enough to give a man a good appetite. It was such a morning when one feels one's spirits rising to the happy medium and beyond. It was the chapel-hour in Christ Church, and a surplice-day. So most of the students were at the cathedral morning prayer. The "scouts" were hurrying to and fro in the rooms, busy getting the breakfasts from the buttery, and the aged bed-makers were, as usual, in a state of fearful excitement lest Mr. So-and-so should swear because his rooms weren't done, and the rooks were flying

merrily as ever in the grounds—those “old ancients” of Christ Church whom one looks on complacently for tradition’s, or rather old acquaintance’ sake.

But let us hasten to the rooms of the Honorable Ernest Trevyllian. We needn’t knock, for he is away in chapel. His rooms are on the first floor. Well, he can afford it; his father is a peer, and rich as Croesus. Can we judge of the man by the room, I wonder? Let us leave the blazing fire, and sit down in this embrasure, and, vulgarly speaking, “take stock.” The rich, heavy carpet under our feet attracts us as our feet sink into the moss-like fabric. A dark, crimson groundwork, with a wreath of white lilies seemingly cast here and there. Heavy crimson-velvet curtains shade our embrasure and the windows, while, underneath, the costly lace curtains, yet unremoved, peep out. Under the windows are flower-stands, with fresh exotics. The chairs, table, and piano-case, are of the same Gothic as the room, and padded with rich velvet, to match the carpet. On the mantel stands a triptych of dark walnut-wood. Let us open it. What do we expect to see—a figure of some beautiful girl, his betrothed, perhaps? Oh, no. There stands the Crucifixion in all its grandeur, and,

at the foot of the cross, clasping it in agony, the gloriously-beautiful upturned face of the Magdalen; and the Mother of Christ, her blue mantle sweeping the rocky ground, is weeping bitterly. St. John, too, stands there, sharing in that general sorrow. But we must not stay. Yet, as we close the triptych, engraven on the rocky Calvary, something catches our eye: "E. T. Remember here. E. L. Oremus pro invicem." On the corners of the mantel rest massive candelabra; while, above, an oil-painting of Doré's "Christian Martyrs." On the opposite side of the room stands a bracket, with a figure of the Holy Mother in Parian marble, a bookcase, crowded with the newest publications, and the open piano, with its music-stand well-filled. One thing strikes us, though—a lectern of oak, which, for its ancient Gothic faithfulness, might have stood by the bedside of the Venerable Bede as, in weak and dying accents, he made his translation of the Gospel of St. John. And the breakfast-table, adorned with fresh exotics, and rich with all the luxuries in season, is set for four. But he is long in coming. Let us enter the bedroom. A pale-blue Brussels carpet, with some fantastic pattern, white satin paper, and light

curtains round the windows, a crucifix over the bed, a small altar in a recess, the toilet-table, with its many excellences, and all the paraphernalia Pool turns out in the shape of a fashionable wardrobe lying scattered on the chairs; pictures of a gentle, high-bred lady on the wall, evidently the mother of the owner, and a fierce, handsome, haughty man, perhaps the father. The costly jeweled timepiece on the mantel informs us that the hour advances swiftly. Let us hasten to the embrasure, taking to ourselves the invisible boots of the hero of the children's book. Well we did so! Steps sound in the quod. We can hear a voice through the door.

"Good-morning, old man; you must be hungry?"

"Yes, Maurice, I am."

"By Jove! where is Trevyllian?"

"Oh, he won't be long; he stopped to the special Celebration of Dr. Pusey."

"Well, let's go in, at all events."

"Bravo! one of Burnand's."

Reader, I present you Lord Cecil de Grey, and the Hon. Maurice Ashley. Cecil de Grey, a tall, handsome young fellow of nineteen, broad-shouldered, with dark hair and eyes, and an expressive

face. As he throws his white surplice on one side, one sees the breadth of his shoulders and the graceful form. Maurice Ashley is tall, but his face is not so handsome as De Grey's—the nose is too large and the mouth too sensual—but the figure is good and the toilet irreproachable.

“I say, De Grey, I always feel like a church rather churchified, in Ernest Trevyllian's room.”

“Probably, Ashley, he has changed since you knew him, and altered his rooms, too.”

“Yes ; but who told you ? ”

“Some Oriel men. I breakfasted there yesterday—a champagner at Vincent's.”

“Well, as you know, I may as well tell you some more. Ernest Trevyllian was awfully fast—his first term this room was crowded with the loveliest girl-faces imaginable—oil-paintings, sketches, etchings. Where that blessed triptych stands was a whip-case—and a splendid collection he had—and a pipe-case, too ; what *écume de mer* ! Well, I sigh over the alteration. Then, I could tell you of a pretty villa residence not far from Oxford, and a fairy who dwelt there. By Jove ! what trouble he expended on that house, d . . . n it, he did ! Blue-satin walls—such couches—such

costly arrangements! Then his horses! What horses he kept! Every man envied him. This went on for four terms, then he changed. Villa demolished—room altered—man changed, d . . n it, changed fearfully. But I like him for the old reveler he was."

De Grey started. "What changed him, Ashley?"

"You been here, d . . n it, yes, two terms, and ask what changed him? Why, Edward Lascine, to be sure. Poor Lascine, what a devilish fascinating fellow he was!"

"Yes, Trevyllian and he were immense chums," said De Grey, musingly; "no wonder Lascine changed him. No one could associate with Lascine and not model one's self on him. *Me voilà*, one example."

"You, you outrageous old vagabond! you are not worthy to utter his name."

"Well, if I'm not. You are right, Trev is his model. This room is the fac-simile of Lascine's."

"Excepting the bedroom."

"I was never in Lascine's bedroom, but men have told me of its asceticism."

"One would not judge so by the window-garden outside."

"Oh, no; those creepers were to hide what passed within. Father Enson has hinted of strange doings—strange penances we should not understand."

"Well, old boy, men may say what they will of Ed Lascine; devil as I glory in being, I admire him, and I admire Trev for following his example; but I hope Trev will never be a Catholic—I mean a real Roman."

De Grey smiled. "I fear he means following Lascine. This is the first time he has given a breakfast since Ed went away. By Jove! how miserable it looks with the old fellow's vacant place there."

"Yes, it does; but don't talk about it, though. It makes me feel miserable that our set has lost such a jolly fellow."

"So it does me. Enson is the only one sharp on him—he preached about it last Sunday evening. Trev was there, and knew whom he meant, and vows he'll never go near the church again."

"What has become of Lascine?"

"I don't know, but he is sure to be a Roman Catholic priest."

"God help poor Mrs. Lascine! it will kill her."

Last Christmas we had a real jolly time there, and she dotes on him."

The door slowly opened, and Mason appeared with Trevyllian's letters.

"What time breakfast, Mason?"

"In ten minutes, sir, is the time ordered."

"Thanks. Letters for me, Mason?"

"No, sir."

The scout left the room, and De Grey, turning to Ashley, asked if he really knew of Lascine's doings since he had left the university.

"Yes, my dear old soul, I do; he has been staying at St. Augustine's Monastery in town."

"Then it is a miracle if he does not become a priest. Father Ring, who was in the army, I have often heard the gov. speak of, and he says that his eloquence and goodness are irresistible. Now, if he makes that eloquence bear on Ed—well, it will be a miracle, indeed, and we will have to bid good-by forever to the dearest old fellow that ever breathed."

"Don't let's speak about it—it makes me feel bad. If you promise not to do so, I'll tell you a miracle-tale I heard in Ireland. Devilish witty, those Irish. Well, this we'll call theological defi-

nition of a priest. He had been preaching on miracles one Sunday, and was asked by one of his congregation going home for a more lucid definition of miracles. 'Is it a miracle you want to understand?' asked the priest. 'Yes, yer riv'rence.' 'Then walk on in front of me, and I'll think how I can explain it.' The man walked on, and the priest came behind him, and gave him a d . . . d great kick. 'Why do ye do that?' roared the parishioner. 'Did you feel it?' said the priest. 'To be sure I did,' replied the poor devil. 'Well, then, remember this: it would have been a miracle if you had not.'"

The two fellows, shrieking with laughter, and holding their sides, were disturbed by the entrance of the Honorable Ernest Trevyllian and the Marquis of Marle.

"What a row you fellows are making! Tell us the joke. And you have been playing some joke on old Stumbles, my bed-maker. She can't find her keys anywhere."

"O Trev," said Ashley, "we only did her a favor. Fearing some one would steal the keys, we put them in that ungodly big pitcher of milk. Poor old devil, she'll hunt for them all day!"

"You are as incorrigible as ever," said Trevyllian, as he put his head outside the door, and shouted, "Stumbles, look in your milk!"

"Now for the joke," cried Marle.

While the story is repeated, we scrutinize our men.

Ernest Trevyllian, nearly six feet high, a clear, beautiful complexion, real Grecian features, but with dark-gray eyes and black eyebrows and hair. As he threw off his surplice, and hung it with Marle's at the back of the door, the exquisite contour of his figure, and his good taste in dressing, make themselves remarked — the lavender-cloth trousers, falling gracefully over his small feet, and the pilot-coat of stylish black serge, contrasting with the clear complexion. The only jewelry he wore was one snake-ring, in which glittered a diamond of great value. Marle was not so tall, but with a real Saxon face. The light, flaxen hair parted down the centre of his head. The complexion was very fair, almost womanish, but the manly, determined expression, and the great muscles swelling out on his arms, proclaimed him a boat-racing man, and a man whom Oxford since has gloried in.

"Has Mason been in?"

"Oh, yes, Trev; and we asked what time breakfast, and he said ten minutes."

"Will you fellows let me read my letters?"

"Yes, if you won't be beastly long."

"Well, I won't. By Jove!"—and Trevyllian started—"a letter from Edward Lascine."

Silence fell over the room, broken by Marle:

"Remember, Trev, we are eager for news of him."

But Trevyllian did not hear—he had gone into his bedroom, and the door was closed. Let us glance over his shoulder and read:

"ST. OSMUND'S COLLEGE, ST. CECILIA.

"MY VERY DEAR TREV: All is over; my lot has fallen in pleasant places. I have chosen to enter the priesthood. I left St. Austin's Monastery as soon as possible to settle straight down to hard work in a Catholic college. Deep, hard penance must atone for the past, and place me in the lowly posture of the Magdalene. She was wandering, and soiled with the deepest stains. But, gaze now, dear Trev. That stainless white flower, that trophy of His mercy, rests on His dear bosom in a blaze

of heavenly light. Surely we, too, may hope. It has pained me much leaving Oxford and the dear old fellows; of course, things are different here. No news from home. I am forbidden to write or go there; even 'the mother' may not write to me. That I am doing right, I am sure; for the Divine Master has said, 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.' You know my opinion on all subjects. With you, now, continuing your hard reading and prayer, we shall soon again be kneeling at the same altar.

"Think of me often as kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament praying for you.

"Ever your friend,

"E. LASCINE."

The next letter was from Mrs. Lascine—very short:

"TREVEN MANOR, *November 18th.*

"DEAR MR. TREVYLLIAN: As you were Edward's greatest friend, you may hear from him now and again. Let me hear how he is, without his knowledge. Mr. Lascine considers it best no one from home should communicate with him. We shall be pleased to welcome you for a few days at

Christmas. With kindest regards to Lord and Lady Frances,

“ Believe me,

“ Very sincerely yours,

“ MAUDE LASCINE.”

“ Haughty and proud as ever, but wounded to the quick. Poor dear old Ed, I wish I had the strength to do as he has done! In spite of every thing, I know he is right.” Sharply Ernest Trevyllian bit his lip, not caring to acknowledge, even to himself, what he felt. A pained expression rested over the eyes; the forehead wrinkled slightly in thought; but he tossed the other letters on one side, and opened the door leading into the sitting-room. “ I hope you fellows will excuse me; it was awfully rude of me leaving the room, but I couldn’t help reading my letters just then.”

No allusion was made to Lascine. The pained expression on Ernest Trevyllian’s face was gone, or rather hidden under his kind manners. Every one seemed to have made an effort, and the usual mirth and jollity prevailed. Mason was there, bringing in the *entrées*, and the sparkling ale was frothing over the silver tankard, refilled as it passed from

mouth to mouth. Ashley's wit was at the keenest. De Grey was sarcastic and amusing as ever. Marle's thoughts were running in the same groove as Trevyllian's, and each tried to hide it from the other.

"Who votes for pulling down to Iffley?"

"I vote we all go," said Marle.

"Wait until you dip your beaks in my last batch of champagne."

"Willingly—readily—decidedly."

"Echo of echoes, 'decidedly,'" chimed in Ashley.

"What would old Enson say to us now if he looked in?"

"I guess he would be like the guardian angel in the story of 'The Irish Priest,'" said Ashley. "The priest told his parishioner that 'every time he went to a public-house his guardian angel stood weeping outside the door.' 'Bedad,' said Pat, 'if he had a sixpence, he would soon slip in behind me!' So would Enson."

Chorus: "Shame! shame! shame!"

"You fellows, I want all to come to a Wine at my rooms at eight."

"Marle, dear old fellow, excuse me; I am fear-

fully engaged to-night. Really I can't come," said Trevyllian.

"He is going to be like Thomas à Kempis," said De Grey, "pretending some one is waiting for him in his cell" (pointing to the bedroom).

"Oh, fie! for shame! Shocking!" laughed Ashley and Lord Cecil de Grey, "to imply such a thing!"

Marle, almost choking, replied: "I vote that the Honorable Maurice Ashley be considered a beast, and, when he imbibes champagne, be excluded from our company."

Ernest Trevyllian looked very grave.

"I only wish I had any likeness to Thomas à Kempis. I shall endeavor, like him, to make 'Silence my friend, Labor my companion, and Prayer my auxiliary.'"

"You will be a Roman yet, Trev. Although I do make fun of your piety, it's only to keep you from that."

"I shall do what God wills, Maurice."

Even Maurice the noisy quietened after this.

"Where are you fellows going to stay this Christmas?" asked Marle.

"I go to Lord Todmorden's," said De Grey.

"I to my paternal purgatory," said Ashley.

"And you, Trev?" asked Marle.

"I spend my Christmas with the Lascines at Treven Manor."

"Will Ed be there?"

"No," was the short reply.

"Do you know," said De Grey, "old Lascine will not let him touch a thing in his rooms, even his clothes? He has written to Enson, telling him he would rather have followed Ed to the grave than see him a Catholic, and that he has cut off his allowance to fifty pounds a year. Imagine Ed the elegant on fifty pounds! Poor devil! Why, it wouldn't pay a fellow's cigar-bill."

"Ed has many friends, and won't want," said Trevyllian; "besides, he has no need now to lead such a swell life; so he hasn't need of so much allowance."

"That's true; but, anyway, Ed Lascine would be content in sackcloth and ashes."

"And the Honorable Maurice Ashley would be content in a champagne-bin or a stable."

"You may take your oath of it, gentlemen."

Thus the conversation rushed on, boisterous and sober by degrees; but we must leave it here;

so, gentle reader, imagine you see our friends on the bosom of the broad Isis, pulling steadily along, but with two sad hearts, covered with joyous faces—those of the Honorable Ernest Trevyllian and the Marquis of Marle.

CHAPTER VII.

HIS HOME.

THE same day that Edward Lascine started for St. Osmund's, almost at the same hour, we are entering Treven Manor. The rain beats against the massive panes of glass, and the wind howls round the corners of the old house. The grounds look dreary enough in their garments of wet, and the leaves, twirling in dismal circles, are falling funereally from the trees. The façade of Treven Manor is grand; in the rear are the out-houses and stables; but from the grand entrance, between a pretty clump of trees, one catches a glimpse of the Church of St. Winefride, at Holynton.

The lights are burning dimly in the hall, and, in the rooms above, the spacious apartments in which she had dwelt as Maude Treven, Mrs. Lascine was dressing for the stately dinner at seven

o'clock. Her maid had arranged the heavy folds of her black-velvet robe gracefully around her, and the Honiton-lace overskirt fell in soft waves over the figure. The still fair throat and neck were bare, and also the arms. The hair was arranged *à la Grecque*.

"What a beautiful woman!" one would exclaim, involuntarily—more beautiful to-night, for her face was shaded by sorrow.

"Won't you come to the dressing-room, madam, to see the effect in the glass?"

"No, Elise."

"But, madam, I must fasten those pearls in your hair, and select the jewelry."

"No jewelry to-night, Elise. Leave me."

Elise wonderingly walked off.

"What can ail mistress to-night?" thought she.

Elise was gone; Mrs. Lascine was alone. She shut the door leading into the dressing-room, shutting out every spark of light and comfort. The face, haughty and stern no more, was pressed close to the window-pane. The hot tears coursed rapidly down the cheeks as she strained her eyes to catch a glimpse through the trees of the little Church of

St. Winefride. She was grieving because her boy was a Catholic. Now, he could not be ordained to the little church longer, where she had fondly hoped he would minister.

"Oh," she thought, "how many hearts will grieve over my beautiful boy; those aged people who have ever looked up to him as their future clergyman; his uncle, how he will grieve! How can I break it to him and May? And then I am forbidden to write him. I have promised. Eddy, the darling, will think me cold; will think his mother does not care for him. Oh, my boy, my boy, would God I could have died to avert this! And Mr. Lascine vows I shall not see him unless he recants. He never will; he acts from conviction; and Eddy is so firm, and his whole life long has believed this cruel Catholic faith. My darling, delicate boy, away from his luxurious Oxford rooms and Oxford comforts, in some cold cell, away from the world, in a Catholic college! Oh, he will die—he will die—my beautiful boy!"

Quiet, almost as a statue, now she stood. Mothers, you who read this, perhaps can understand her sorrow. You who would scoff, pass on to the next chapter, and laugh not over a proud, weak woman's

grief. It is a sacred and a holy thing; and remember your turn is fast coming, and you only can be made "perfect through suffering."

The first dinner-bell rang. Mrs. Lascine passed into her dressing-room, and stood before the glass. The traces of tears were soon wiped away, and the proud woman of the world stood there, one would say, with every gentle feeling crushed. How little we know really of people we meet in daily life! Taking up a white ostrich-plume, she tore the end off and fastened it with a diamond aigrette in the braided coil. She then passed through the door, and knocked at a room-door on the opposite side of the gallery.

A gentle voice said, "Come in, *maman*."

It is May Crowner, lying there, clad in her white dressing-gown with the satin trimmings. She looks still a sweet girl—one of those fair English girls, modest and retiring, whom it does one good to see.

"How are you to-night, darling?" said the mother, as she kissed her daughter's brow.

"*Beaucoup mieux, ma chère maman*."

"And baby?"

The little bundle of antiquity (at least with

every appearance, in its swaddling-clothes) was held up, and grandmamma kissed it.

"What is the matter, *maman*? You are sad to-night; you have been crying."

Involuntarily, before Mrs. Lascine knew, she had told.

"Eddy has turned a Roman Catholic" (May's eyes filled with tears). "And, May, you must write him no more; he ceases to be a member of the family."

Scarcely it was spoken, and the subject passed, but May could read what a silent sorrow was eating her mother's heart away, and she prayed for her.

"Eddy has done this conscientiously."

"Perhaps so, May. How could he do it otherwise? He has done it through conscience of right, or he would never give up home, his friends, his prospects, and his church, for a sect in which we have no influence."

"He has done it conscientiously, and I admire him. I do not blame him."

"May, this subject agitates you; we must leave it for to-night."

"Promise you will do all you can for him with papa."

"May, am I not his mother?"

The entrance of Mrs. Lascine into the drawing-room was what the world would call a success. Gracefully she swept along, the velvet train making no noisy rustle. Calmly she sank upon a *fauteuil*, and entertained her uncle's guests. Only once was she in an agony perceptible to others.

The Duchess of Mount Pleasant was conversing with her. In the old duchess's tone one read real interest.

"And Mr. Edward, my dear, when does he return from Oxford?"

"We have not heard lately, but it cannot be long."

"I thought mothers always knew?"

"Your grace does not know how Oxford is altered lately, and young men are so wild generally that we poor mothers are forgotten."

"But your Edward is not wild; in fact, the Countess of Castleton was telling me all the mothers were aiming at him last season for their daughters. And the daughters are crazy for him. How proud a mother should be of such a handsome, fascinating son!"

Mr. Treven and Herbert Crouner, followed by

the other gentlemen staying in the house, entered, and luckily Mrs. Lascine was spared a reply.

As Mr. Treven hands the Duchess of Mount Pleasant down to dinner, let us examine him. An aged man of seventy, long, white hair falling over the dress-coat; but the calm old face a study, the blue eyes looking out so placidly from the clear and still beautiful complexion. How much Edward Lascine will be like him as he grows older!

A very merry dinner-party this, with that king of an old English gentleman at their head. The graceful banter, the superb dinner, and the sparkling wines, serving but as the externals for the brilliant wit to play around. And the ancient old butler, a thing one does not see now hardly ever, except in some such an old ancestral mansion as Treven Manor. Now I look back and see Mr. Treven, and the stately old butler standing behind the walnut-wood chair, and I sigh over something like the dreamless fabric of the vision. Both now are sleeping the long sleep.

And Mrs. Lascine. She was looking her best, the life of the whole party; flashes of wit, and now and again of withering sarcasm, as some idle compliment jarred on her, broke from her.

Old Mr. Treven looked with pride on his niece as he thought on the blood of the old stock, and saw before him in Mrs. Lascine the likeness of his own mother. A green place rested in the old bachelor's heart, the love of his mother still fresh.

In the drawing-room, after the gentlemen entered, excitement was at the highest. Ella Northenden had silenced the room with her beautiful singing.

Old Mr. Treven crept round to Mrs. Lascine.

"Maud, my darling" (and the old man's voice quavered), "I have seen all in the *Times* of to-day; it has near broken my old heart. Darling, how you must feel it!"

"Hush, uncle! I cannot bear it yet. His father will not have him home or see him. He has shortened his allowance. Poor Eddy! he is my life, and now I am parted from it. It is a cruel death to me—to live seemingly, and yet to have a dead life!"

"Hush, Maudie, my Maudie! When we are both stronger, we will see what we can do for him, when we can bear it."

And many a long day passed, and Edward Lascine's name was unmentioned, as though he had never been.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE COLLEGE HOME.

“Build to-day, then, strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base ;
And ascending and secure
Shall to-morrow find its place.”

LONGFELLOW.

CHRISTMAS-DAY was gleaming over St. Osmund's. A calm, strong light shone through the chapel—the first clear burst of daylight that hailed the joyous morn of the Nativity. At the side-altars the Aurora masses were being celebrated. Within the Chapel of the Sacred Heart, serving Father Irving's mass, Edward Lascine was kneeling. He was thinner than when we last saw him, but the face was brighter and more spiritual, with that indescribable glow of a convert's first fervor. Father Clare had warned him the winter was coming—as the winter must come over each spiritual life—and

now he was gathering provision into the barn to last him over that trying period. And well he succeeded.

I see him now, his face flushing with joy, as he assisted at the midnight mass; and Father Irving had given him the privilege of serving the Aurora mass and the last mass of the Nativity at the early dawn. And, in the interval between, while others slept, he had been kneeling in his own room in silent watch. Later on, when the students came down to their meditation and masses, Edward Lascine, calm and recollected, was kneeling in his place as though he had just come in with the others.

In the corridor, going to breakfast, the merry Christmas wishes echoed on every side, and discussions on the midnight mass. Merriest of the merrry were Edward Lascine and Paul Wright. The whole refectory was joyous and gay at the breakfast-table, for at midnight they had all received the Food of the Strong. Edward Lascine's face glittered with joy. To him it was the Christmas he had longed for all his youth up—the right old mediæval way of keeping Christmas. Different, indeed, to his last Christmas at Treven Manor. He

remembered the crowded country-house, the decorations, the elegant breakfast, the dinner, and the evening reception, followed by a ball. Treven was sad without him, but he was not sad without Treven.

His place in the refectory was altered ; he now sat next Carley, on the Philosophers' table. His rooms of study were altered, too, and he was himself transferred to the Philosophers' quarters, and had a room opposite Carley's.

His room was totally unlike Carley's. Dark crimson-*rep* curtains shrouded the windows, coconut matting covered the floor, the simple bed in one corner, a covered-in wash-hand stand, that made a desk in the day, a few chairs. On the mantel the figure we know already and the candlesticks. On the opposite side a figure of the Blessed Virgin, and a Gothic table covered with books—presents from the Duchess of Graham, a Catholic herself, and interested in Edward Lascine by Father Ring.

Over the *prie-Dieu* hung a large crucifix, and the only atom of luxury was a stand of magnificent flowers in the window-recess, which were regularly changed by the florist every week—whose doing

this was, no one knew, and the florist was too well paid to say. I always imagined it was Mrs. Lascine, and I fancy Edward Lascine thought so, too, and allowed this consolation to his mother. At any rate, during the time St. Osmund claimed Edward Lascine, the altars of the Blessed Sacrament and Mary Immaculate were more beautiful than ever.

The breakfast was over, and Paul Wright, with his arm linked in Lascine's, was pacing the ambulatory.

"Did you like the midnight mass, Ed?"

"How can you ask? Do you know, Paul, I had been anticipating this, and the reality was more than the anticipation? Gordon's voice in the Graduate, ringing through the chapel, I can hear now, especially that duet, '*Ex utero ante luciferum genui te.*'"

"I gave you my Communion last night, old boy."

"And I gave mine to my mother, Paul, so you gave her yours. Well, she will need them to-day."

"Do you feel wretched for her?"

"No, I trust in God! I have given my life for hers."

"It is noble of you, Ed!"

"But, Paul, it is my duty."

"Have you thought more of the subject we were speaking of the other day?"

"Have you?"

"Decidedly; the life here is too easy for me, and my vocation to religion is decided long ago. My three vows—poverty, chastity, and obedience—I took before the Blessed Sacrament years ago, and the time my confessor fixed for me to remain here will be up in one year."

"I do so envy you, Paul! I recognize my vocation, too. I preceive that poverty, chastity, and obedience, in the sternest degree, only are right. They are the pillars which support the vaulted roof of the beauteous gospel of peace; and, through taking and close-following those vows, we are more Christlike.

"I am glad we think alike on this subject."

"It is only one of the many, dear old Paul."

"You are right, and your stern way of looking at things has done me good."

"Am I stern?"

"Why, yes; the nickname the "Bounds" have given you proves that. You really have merited

the name Father de Ravignan rejoiced in in his novitiate, 'Iron Bar.'"

"Paul, you must not compare a wretched fellow like me to an apostolic man like Father de Ravignan."

"I don't see why not; you have the same drawing to the Jesuits."

"And you have a drawing to the Dominicans."

"Is that a mortal sin, Mr. Lascine?"

"No, Mr. Wright, but 'people that live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.'"

Carley's joining the party stopped the conversation. In his usual merry way he managed to chime in, "Why, Paul, what are you doing? You must be a strong man to bend an 'Iron Bar' in this way every hour of your life. I shall christen you 'the Great Gymnast,' 'the Unconquerable Iron Bar Bender.' Here have I for two days been trying to obtain the honor of a walk with the 'Iron Bar' in question, and could not obtain it."

"My dear Carley, you knew I was engaged over my thesis, and the other time I was helping the Sacristans with you, and the time you asked me was the time of my private visit to the Blessed Sacrament. It was a decision between Carley and God—I chose God." (Carley softened down.)

"You are not to blame, I only meant chaff."

"Will you two fellows join my tea-party to-night at Brill? Four o'clock precisely—permission from rector—only six others besides you—other 'populars.' Do please a fellow for once and come."

"I will come, Carley, if Lascine will," said Paul.

"Well, if you put it in that way, I will go."

"Bravo! then I shall advertise special attractions, the 'Iron Bar' and the 'Unconquerable Gymnast.' The banquet to-night is not until six; I will get you back in time."

"By-the-way, Carley," said Lascine, "are the letters in yet?"

"Yes. I saw the Prefect go to both your rooms. The post was late this morning; that is the reason they were not given out in the refectory."

"Let us go, Paul. I give curiosity free rein to-day."

Lying on the table in his room he found a bundle of letters. Father Ring, and others of St. Augustine's Monastery, had remembered him, the Duchess of Graham, Ernest Trevyllian, Cecil de Grey, and his mother. Our business lies only with two of these letters—Ernest Trevyllian's and Mrs. Lascine's.

"TREVEN MANOR, *December 24th.*

"MY OWN DARLING BOY: How can I pass to-morrow without you? It will be the first Xmas we have been apart since our birth. Think of the stately dinner here to-morrow. My heart will be breaking to see your place vacant. Eddie, will you not have pity on your sorrowing mother? It is useless your writing, I shall not receive the letter. The only remedy you can make is the abjuration of these pernicious Roman errors. Let us be as before. Come to the glad home, the warm hearts, and the happy future that await you.

"Your sorrowing mother,

"MAUDE LASCINE."

Reader, was he tempted? Yes; I believe on that Christmas-day he knelt in the garden of Gethsemane—knelt there and was strengthened.

"TREVEN MANOR, *December 24th.*

"DEAR ED: I came to Treven yesterday for Christmas. The house is full as ever, as on other years. Every one is asking for you, but the Governor seems intensely dull. Mrs. Lascine is all life as usual, but I know her heart is breaking. Dear old Mr. Treven came and chatted with me last evening

about you. How I feel for him ; the calm old face looking so sad, and the tears streaming out of his blue eyes, as he spoke of your absence to-morrow ! Your brother John is lively and amusing as ever, and awfully spoony on Ella Northenden. Dear old Treven is gay as ever. How much I miss you, but I came here only to endeavor to break the ice for you. I had almost forgotten to tell you we have an early celebration to-morrow, at St. Winefrides, at Holynton. You will remember the difficulty you and my unworthy self had in getting this concession last year. Now your Uncle Richard is anxious for it. He is becoming a Churchman. I thought of the midnight celebration at St. Osmund's last night, and I knelt in the cold one hour joining in spirit. I admire your resolution in holding out. I wish I had the courage to join the Roman Church. Pray for me. A merry, merry Christmas for you ; and remember, I will let no one at Treven forget you. In great haste, dear old boy,

“ Ever lovingly yours in Him,

“ ERNEST TREVYLLIAN.”

What wonder if the face of Edward Lascine was a shade paler than usual, and that, kneeling before

the high altar, Paul Wright found him at three o'clock kneeling there calm as usual? In after-years Mrs. Lascine said, "Some invisible presence supported her through that day."

I thought then of the old chapel of St. Osmund, and the worshiper before the altar. Was his worship useless?

Two years have passed away, and bright June weather is crowning, as of old, "Merrie England." From the Church of St. Osmund merry peals resound, echoing and reëchoing in among the hills. It is the jubilee of the college. The corridors are gay with festoons and potted plants, wreaths, banners, scrolls. Much company is strolling about, but the church seems the great attraction, although the High Mass and "Te Deum" are over, and the athletic sports have commenced.

Every one is asking, "Who is the sacristan?" "Who is the sacristan?"

Monsignore Witton, the president, comes to the rescue. "The sacristan is a young convert, an Oxford man."

Let us hasten to the sacristy and see. Sure enough, Edward Lascine. Now, though he wears

the biretta, which gives a more priestly look to his priestly face, he is taller, too, but even the cassock cannot hide the graceful figure as he stoops to open a vestment-drawer, and carefully puts away the rich vestments. The sacristy, as one may imagine, is in disorder after a high mass and procession with "Te Deum," at which six bishops have assisted.

The two under-sacristans are busy — Lascine breaks the silence :

"You have friends here, John, have you not?"

"Yes, Mr. Lascine."

"And you, Fred?"

"Yes, sir."

"You may go; I will do the work."

"Let us stay, sir; there is so much."

"Your friends wish you, doubtless. Go."

He was alone. Surely this is the same Edward Lascine of yore—the same generosity. But he has received a great grace in ordination, even in minor orders, for he has hard work to do now. An hour's work wrought a change in the sacristy. Another hour, and the high altar was arranged for the evening benediction. The sanctuary was resplendent; choicest exotics, gracefully arranged, breathing out their sweet lives near the tabernacle; stately can-

delabra resting on the beautiful marble altar. The glimmer of the sanctuary lights reflected in the costly cloth-of-gold curtains falling around the walls. The silence seemed to speak, and say, "Hæc est requies mea, hic habitabo," as if anticipating the peace that falls on a soul from communion with Christ. High in the roof of the old Gothic church floated banner and streamers, designs were placed on the walls, and festoons of dark holly-leaves gracefully entwined round the Gothic windows. The very sun itself seemed anxious to do something for so fair a picture, and threw its rays through the stained-glass windows, and tessellated the marble floor with myriad colors.

A fair picture indeed, and a young Levite at the altar, with a mind as beautiful as the fair offerings already offered to the Divine Lord; but, surely, in the eyes of God, that offering which was to be made "perfect through suffering," and "through much tribulation to enter into his kingdom," was the most beautiful.

As Lascine left the church to assist at the athletic sports, he encountered the Bishop of Beverley, the Archbishop of Westminster, and Father Irving, pacing the corridor.

Father Irving stopped. "Mr. Lascine, I must congratulate you on the church to-day, and also the quiet way the functions have passed."

His grace of Westminster sniffed, "Well, Edward, have you heard from home lately?"

"No, my lord."

The Bishop of Beverley laughingly said: "You heard of the fate of my letter, Edward?"

"It is true; it arrived at Treven, but was consigned to the grate immediately."

"Probably mine shared the same fate," rejoined the archbishop, "for I have had no answer."

"I am sorry for the disrespect shown to your lordships. I would rather they had visited their displeasure on me. Allow me to apologize for the neglect."

His grace of Westminster, in his kind way, linked his arm in that of Edward Lascine. "My child," said he, "you have yet much more of the cross to bear—deeper and deeper sorrows must pass over you—for, 'through much tribulation' you shall enter into the kingdom of God. The crown of thorns will press upon your head, but, in your agonies, do not dash it from you, for in heaven I know of a dazzling crown that shall counterbalance this ;

and I see a name traced in letters of light. That name, Edward Lascine, is yours if you will bear your cross in the spirit of your Saviour. And never forget, my child, to pray much to the Mother of Sorrows."

"I will try, my lord, to be all you would wish me."

"Then I fear not for you, my son in Christ. I have known you at Oxford, I have known your name and your family, I have known you as a Catholic, and I know when a Lascine has given his word he will conquer."

"Lascine! Lascine!" The name rang through the corridor.

"The sports are waiting for you," Father Irving said. "In St. Osmund's honor you must relinquish St. Osmund's son, my lord!"

Lascine sank on his knees and received the Archiepiscopal Blessing.

As he withdrew, the Archbishop addressed the Bishop of Beverley: "I congratulate you, my brother, on having such a man in your diocese."

"I love him, your grace, as my own; he has rare qualities, and doubtless will wear the mitre yet."

"Never ; he has the pride of humility—he will be a religious."

"I anticipate great trials for him. I know the spirit of the Lascines well. They will not leave one inch of ground untrodden to break his vocation."

"May I escort your Lordships to the grounds ?"

"Yes, Father Irving. Let us hasten to see my brother's champion."

How gay the grounds were ! The flags flying, the sunbeams glinting over the green grass, the background of carriages of the neighboring gentry, the rope-encircled arena, round which crowded happy, youthful faces ; the bright-blue sky above, with its fleecy, white cloudlets ; the slight breeze rustling the leaves, and the merry ring of laughter, and the buzz of chat, without the slightest crackle of care, those merry, musical peals of college-laughter ; without the slightest forced sound one detects in the drawing-rooms, and receptions, and home-circles, of this nineteenth century.

Lascine would only suffer his name to be entered for two things—the long jump and the two-mile race. As he came on the field in his cricketing suit of white flannel, with black edgings, and

the college arms embroidered on the breast, with all the grace of old times, the ringing cheer that saluted him argued well for his coming success. A deep-crimson flush gave him just the color he wanted to look handsome, and many a compliment from the assembled visitors was heard as he passed into the arena to his place for the long jump.

Robert Weed came to him.

"What penance are you to get for being so late? I think, as I am master of ceremonies for the sports, I will make you jump first."

"I couldn't help being late, old fellow. I was engaged in the sacristy for to-night; and, as the boys had friends, I let them come on the ground, so I was detained longer."

"Well, I'll let you off. You will jump last."

As Weed left him, the jumping commenced. Lascine, unconscious that he was remarked, was gracefully leaning against a post, talking with Father Clare. The blue eyes were gleaming with vivacity; the broad shoulders seemed broader as the light costume showed the perfection of the figure, and the tiny cricketing boots were eliciting many remarks.

As he laughingly answered Father Clare, the white teeth shone out, and one heard: "For the honor of St. Osmund and Father Clare I entered the lists; I must look on every thing around me as non-existing but the aforesaid St. Osmund and Father Clare, then I shall jump well."

"Success to you in St. Osmund's name, not in mine!" rejoined Father Clare.

"You promised to give me an hour to-day, Father Clare?"

"Yes, but in my room or yours that is impossible, on account of visitors. Lest we should lose the spirit of recollection to-day, let us give that hour to the Blessed Sacrament."

"With pleasure."

"What time?"

"Four till five."

"*Oremus pro invicem.*"

"Then I get the benefit. I agree."

"Mr. Lascine," Robert Weed called.

In a moment he was at his place. Silence reigned a few seconds. One heard a few steps; then a burst of "hurrahs!" Edward Lascine was the victor by one foot.

An eager group was around him now. Mon-

signore Witton came up. The crowd made way for the rector.

"Before your hand is quite shaken off, Mr. Lascine, let me rescue you, and conduct you to the Duchess of Graham, who has been asking for you for some time. She has home-news for you. I must not forget to thank you, and congratulate you on your triumph."

"No need of that, Monsignore. It is a simple effort for St. Osmund and my tutor; no merit of mine in it; thank old Oxford, though my nursing-mother."

He was flushed with his triumph, and brimming over with hilarity, as he sat in the barouche of the Duchess of Graham, and watched the sports.

And the duchess was waiting her opportunity to unfold bad news to him, but, by the advice of Monsignore Witton, she waited until the two-mile heat was over.

"Promise me, Mr. Lascine, to come to me here immediately after the race. I reserve your home-news until then."

He eagerly promised.

"I saw the Honorable Ernest Trevyllian yesterday. He knew I was coming here, and sent you

many messages and this note. I was to tell you the season was insufferably dull to him without you, and the club-house unbearable; and his only consolation is in going to Farm Street to the Jesuits. Lord Cecil de Grey is under instruction to Disraeli's Monsignore Catesby, and the Marquis of Marle is making a retreat at the High Church Mission of Cowley St. John."

"Lascine! Lascine!"

"I must go, your grace, but I promise to return. Your ladyship will kindly excuse me."

The good duchess bowed her head.

I have to tell of another triumph, and the conqueror returning decked with blue ribbons, and followed by a perfect ovation of hurrahs.

As the footman opened the door, and he stepped into the barouche, he said, in answer to the congratulations showered upon him:

"I came only for the home-news, not the congratulations."

In every moment of triumph, the knell of misery is heard; could he not have one day of peace? No; thus we learn to live truly our little life.

"I have," said her grace, "heard from the Countess of Castleton, who is staying with your

mother. She writes me : 'Herbert Crouner is unwell, very unwell ; in fact, in a consumption.' Dr. Pinton has telegraphed for four London doctors ; the consultation is to-day. I have written to know the result ; but I fear we must anticipate the worst."

Those thin, stern lips of Edward Lascine were closed tightly, the flush of triumph was gone ; the blue eyes were moistened, but the iron soul would show no more.

"Perhaps Trevyllian tells me something," said he, after a lapse of ten minutes ; "may I read his letter without your thinking me rude ?"

"My dear Mr. Lascine, do not stand on ceremony."

Hastily the coroneted envelope was torn open, and breathlessly he read :

"No hope, no hope !" the poor white face told, but the iron will showed naught.

"Will your grace excuse me ?"

She had broken it to him as gently as she could ; she saw the effort he made, and slightly bowed her head, then leaned forward, and whispered :

"I shall see you at the banquet ?"

"I promise."

He glided to the edge of the crowd of carriages, and, before those who were waiting for him knew it, he was gone hastily to his room, putting on once more his cassock. As he did so, the clock struck four; he remembered the rendezvous with Father Clare.

At the banquet that night, though not elated or gay, no effort was visible in his conversation. He heard his health drank, and thanks returned to him for the pains taken with the chapel, the sacristy, and the triumph of the sports. Being head sacristan, he was obliged to respond for the others. A few, simple, modest words:

"They had only done their duty. It was a pleasure to work in the church, and they had not expected to be complimented for what was a simple pleasure, and was done *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*."

The Duchess of Graham drove home and told Ernest Trevyllian:

"He has borne it bravely, better than I expected."

A great deal had to be done in the sacristy that evening; the enforced rule of silence reigned. How grateful for it Edward Lascine was! And,

having left the keys at the prefect's room, walking along the moonlit corridors to his own gallery, he slowly muttered those grand words of St. Augustine: "Our hearts were made for thee, O God! and they shall never rest until they rest in thee."

The morrow was coming—a morrow of suffering.

CHAPTER IX.

A DEATH-CALL.

“And though at times impetuous with emotion,
And anguish long suppressed,
The swelling heart heaves, moaning, like the ocean,
That cannot be at rest—
We will be patient, and assuage the feeling
We may not wholly stay;
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,
The grief that must have way.”

HERBERT CROWNER was dead at Treven Manor !
In the bright, full morning the last call had come,
that was to lead him through the “iron portal we
call Death.” Where? Would I could say! I
only hope to one of those “many mansions” of
which He has told us. And hope is not forbidden.

Young, beloved, happy, and wealthy, with a
beautiful wife, yet obliged to leave all and hasten
on — whither? Whither the Master called. I

would point up to the blue summer sky, through which the breath of God has passed.

The term before Edward Lascine became a Catholic, Herbert Crowner and he were lounging through the grounds of Treven Manor reading the beautiful drama of "Ion." Herbert Crowner was speaking.

"Well, Eddy, the instinct of immortality, so eloquently uttered by the death-devoted Greek, must find a deep response in every thoughtful soul."

"Even in yours, Herbert? I thought you didn't go in for any thing of the sort? You certainly left a name up at Oxford of being an atheist!"

"Because I never opened my mouth on a religious subject during my whole college career, and went in for deviltry, sowing my wild-oats right and left; but I didn't deserve it."

"I am so glad, Herby. That was the only reason I objected to your marriage, although I loved you very much."

"You did! eh, you young rascal? I'll pay you out for it. But for our 'Ion'" (and the translation continued): "'When about to yield his young

existence as a sacrifice to Fate, his beloved Clemanthe asks if they should not meet again,' to which he replies :

'I have asked that dreadful question of the hills
That look eternal ; of the flowing streams
That lucid flow forever ; of the stars,
Amid whose fields of azure my raised spirit
Hath walked in glory : all were dumb ; but now,
While I thus gaze upon thy living face,
I feel the love that kindles through its beauty
Can never wholly perish—we shall meet
Again, Clemanthe.'

Let's close our books now, and I'll tell you about this passage. My father was immensely fond of this drama, and he made me translate for him one day, and afterward proved immortality to me from the Bible. It was years ago, but, now the old man is dead, the ideas he gave me rise up, and make me call myself a Christian and a member of the Church of England. I am guiltless of catechisms, theologies, and all that absurdity, but I believe in a Divine Essence and a revealed religion, also in a church, which I take to be the Church of England, but some day I shall inquire into the subject—when I am an old man."

The "some day" and the "old age" never came, but the intention was there—God is merciful and hope is not forbidden. They were firm, steadfast friends, Edward Lascine and Herbert Crouner, and Herbert groaned much over Edward's conversion to popery. Two years had rolled away, and they had not seen each other; no letters, even, had passed, and now—now all was over.

The news had reached St. Osmund's that morning—Edward Lascine had heard it. No violent outcry followed the news—he had gone to the chapel, and, marble white, had knelt motionless two long hours before the Adorable Sacrament. Quietly then he had passed to his room, had seen the rector, and had walked through the hot, glaring summer morning to the station. In the evening, the carriage was once more driving up the fair green slopes to Treven Manor, the occupant Edward Lascine. So pale his face as he leant out of the window, and gazed on each familiar spot. The carriage stopped at the door. The cool evening breeze drew out the breath of the sweet-scented flowers, but he heeded them not. His eyes saw the closed blinds, which spoke of death. The servants lined the hall to see "Mr. Edward" once

more. A few kind words he scattered among them. In a moment more his mother was in his arms.

“My darling boy! O my darling!” What a volume of love spoke in those words!

The quiet, musical voice of the son replied: “‘He doeth all things well,’ my mother. ‘The Lord has-given, the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!’”

Edward gently led his mother into the morning-room, opening off the hall. How the proud mother’s face glistened with her love, as she gazed on her boy—the face spiritualized by the sorrow of the last two years!—the clear white complexion through which the blue veins shone, the hair close cut, and the shaven tonsure in honor of his Master’s crown of thorns. The long cassock-like coat made him appear taller—different, indeed, from the fashionable Oxford student, but with a stronger fascination now in that Protestant house. The mother’s eye had taken in the difference in a moment. “Eddy, my darling, your heart has not altered so much as your dress. Have I still my place there?”

“Mother, how can you ask? I love you now

with a stronger love. I try to love you as our dear Lord loved his mother. But, mother, poor May—how does she bear this heavy trial?”

“She is broken, poor child—broken with sorrow.”

“Let us go to her, my mother.”

“Would you like to see dear Herbert for the last time? I had the coffin kept open until this train. The change has already set in. The lead coffin must be soldered down to-night.”

“Which room, my mother?”

“The Crimson Chamber.”

He was gone. The mother sank on the satin couch, deep in thought.

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Gently he unclosed the door of the chamber. The stately crape and satin hangings swept to the floor, and in the middle of the room was the unclosed coffin. The dim light poured in softly over the covered face of the dead.

What could this stately grandeur avail him now? Man, indeed, when he is dead, and stripped of his possessions, and eaten of worms—where, I ask, is he?

Edward Lascine was kneeling there by the

dead, gazing on the pale face which was already changing in that cold embrace of Death. The tears dropped thick and fast, as the whispered prayer for the repose of that soul went up to God's throne.

"By thy Cross and Passion—

Good Lord, deliver him.

Eternal rest give unto him, O Lord ; and may the perpetual light of glory shine upon him."

A knock sounded at the door. It was the old house-keeper.

"O Mr. Edward, that I should see you thus ! Don't, that's a dear, dear boy, stay here. It's no place for the young—don't 'ee, now ! Look your last at Mr. Herbert, because the undertaker's waiting with the solder."

"Leave me for ten minutes, Parkins. In ten minutes the men can come."

"Well, sir," and the good woman's sensitive heart bled as she closed the door, and spoke in the servants' hall of Mr. Edward's sorrow.

Let us draw a veil over that ten minutes. Real sorrow is too deep, too sacred for the world's gaze. Even in the agony of Christ the veil of darkness was drawn between earth and heaven. No human

eye could gaze on that terrible anguish. So, in our sorrow, to be brave we must be alone. Alone, in darkness, at the foot of the cross, strength comes.

The first dinner-bell sounded. The door of a room that had been closed for a long while, except to a proud, sad woman, opened, and Edward Lascine passed down the broad staircase to the drawing-room. Lying on a sofa by the blazing fire was the fair young widow. The black-crape dress fell around the pale, sorrow-stricken form. It seemed as if a few days must see her life close, too.

“Dear May, I wish I could bear this pain for you! My darling sister, how my heart bleeds for you!”

“Dear Eddy, I shall grow strong, now you are here.”

“Hush, May, my little sister!” and he drew the poor tired head on to his breast, and rested his hand on her forehead—“hush, May!” as the great sobs burst forth, “as we journey through life, whatever love we win, we win but in an imperfect manner, and it must leave our hearts bleeding, aching, sorrowing, as yours now. Shortly it is over, gone, over forever. This is the history of human love.

Do you remember, May, what we read in Père Lacordaire's 'Conferences' years ago—a passage that struck both you and myself? It is on Christ's Passion. I forget the exact words; I remember the sense though: 'There is a man whose steps are continually being tracked, and who, withdrawn as He is from our bodily eyes, is still discerned by those who unweariedly haunt the spots where once He sojourned, and who seek Him on his mother's knees by the borders of the lakes, on the mountain-tops, in the secret paths among the valleys, under the shadow of the olive-trees, or in the silence of the desert. There is a man who has died and been buried, but whose sleeping and waking is still watched by us; whose very words still vibrate in our hearts, producing there something more than love, for it gives life to those virtues of which love is the mother. There is a man who, long ages ago, was fastened to a gibbet, and that man is every day taken down from the throne of his passion by thousands of adorers, who prostrate before Him and kiss his bleeding feet with unspeakable emotion.' Let us seek Him, May, in the shadow of the olive-trees in the garden of Gethsemane, the ruby drops of blood bursting from Him in his

great sorrow. There, my little May, you and I can learn to bear our sorrow."

"Lead me by the hand to Him, Eddy."

"Not by my hand, May; by the cross—by the cross you are bearing now. At the foot of the cross, we can pray for Herbert's soul."

"Herbert asked for you before he died—for 'Eddy to pray for him.'"

"So I shall, May, to the day of my death; and, later on, standing at God's altar, the second Calvary, I will offer the immaculate victim, Jesus Christ himself, for Herby's everlasting repose."

In a deep embrasure, hidden by the heavy curtains, Mrs. Lascine sat, listened to her children, and wept.

As the second bell sounded, Mr. Treven came into the room. A glad light danced in his eyes as he saw Edward. The old man's "Welcome, my boy!" showed the depth of his joy. Good old Dr. Pinton, too, showed something of a childish delight as he turned to dash off a tear with the back of his hand.

John Lascine came in, and shook Eddy warmly by the hand.

"How glad I am to see you, Eddy; but what a

'pope's kitten' you look ! Haven't you got a dress-suit, or shall I lend you one ? "

" My days for dress-suits are over now."

John gave a low, long whistle.

" Poor boy, I pity you ! "

The whistle was interrupted by the guests staying in the house entering the room, and the procession forming for dinner.

" Uncle, Eddy takes me to dinner to-night."

" I make that concession to you, Maude."

" Why, Dr. Pinton, what is the matter with you ? "

" Nothing, Mr. Treven, only our young friend's presence has worked wonders for Mrs. Crowner."

Mr. Treven motioned the stately butler to his side.

" John, bring up some of the oldest port. See Mr. Edward's glass is well filled. We must bring some color to those pale cheeks."

" As if I hadn't done it already," said the old butler to himself. " Don't I love Mr. Edward with any on 'em ! " Bowing low, he said : " Yes, sir ; the order shall be attended to."

And Edward Lascine had left this wealth of love. Why ? A stronger love had called him.

The world thought him a fool, but the world did not see the eternal beauty that had seduced him.

Early the next morning, the old house-keeper, Parkins, rapped at the door of Mrs. Lascine's room, and, in a confidential whisper, asked to speak to the occupant.

"Has Mr. Lascine arrived, Parkins?"

"No, madam; but can you come with me to the Crimson Chamber? Lor, my lady, Mr. Edward was there this morning, and the flowers do look beautiful; but lor, mum, will Mr. Treven like it, and Mrs. Crowner? Come and see, my lady."

"Let me see, Parkins; the lying in state will be to-day."

"Yes, my lady."

"Mr. Edward, I am sure, has done nothing we can cavil at; let every thing be as he has left it."

"As you would wish, my lady, only I thought I would speak to you, to be able to tell the servants my lady wished it."

Two hours later, Mrs. Lascine and her daughter passed into the chamber of death.

"Eddy has been here, *maman*."

“Yes, May.”

The crimson-velvet pall was looped up with the deathless amaranth. On the coffin rested a cross of hot-house flowers, above a crown, while at the feet was a banner made of the petals of brilliant flowers—a bordering of crimson, blue, yellow, and white, while on a raised surface in the centre one read the word “Hope.”

“O *maman!* that banner was Herbert’s dream, with those words on it. I told Eddy last night. How good he is!”

The huge silver candelabra stood by the coffin, encased in crape; for it had always been the custom, even during those three hundred years of the Reformation, for the dead of the Trevens to lie in state for one day. The country gentry round called, were shown into the reception-rooms, left their cards on the table card-tray, and, passing on to the chamber of death, walked round the coffin and left the house. A meaningless custom, indeed! Like the “passing bell” in dear old England, it had lost its use, but externally was carried out, a beautiful though scentless flower.

In a corner of the room Edward Lascine was kneeling. The dark hangings had befriended him

until now, but the turning of a leaf in the book he was reading discovered him.

Mrs. Lascine spoke.

"Eddy, why are you kneeling there?"

"I am saying the office for the dead, mother. I am praying for Herbert's soul."

"It is useless, my boy. 'Where the tree falls, there it shall lie.'"

"We will discuss that question, but not here, mother. I could not give up the sweet hope of being able to help those I love after death.—Do not weep, May."

"O Eddy! I love you so much. No one but you would have thought of putting those flowers on Herby's coffin."

"*Maman* would, May; no one forbids that simple office. Death leads us to the beautiful, for it leads us to God, if we have lived as He wishes. Surely the body, the tenantless temple of the Holy Ghost, shall be surrounded with the beautiful, those few days that pass between God's call and the committal to the last resting-place."

The day of the funeral dawned calm, clear, and still. The July sun glinted in wavelets of light over the beautiful grounds of Treven Manor. The

tolling of the bells at St. Winefride's came softened by the distance, to the mansion where the coffin was borne out to the stately hearse, with its waving plumes, which was to convey it to the family vault. The long line of funereal carriages followed, and the tenants, in their black scarves and bands, headed the hearse.

Sadly, solemnly, slowly, to the music of the muffled peal, with sweet flowers kissing his coffin-lid, Herbert Crowner was borne to his long rest in the vault of the peaceful church-yard at Holynton. Those who loved him stood over him, and sighed their last farewell. R. I. P.

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Mr. Lascine and Edward are standing in the conservatory at Treven.

"I cannot, my father; I cannot do it."

"I tell you, Edward, it must be; this nonsense must be given up. Rather than see my son a Catholic, I would see you lying where poor Herbert lies."

"Father, in every thing reasonable I will obey you. Were you poor, I would work for you. I cannot do more. Where Almighty God is concerned, I am inexorable. Between my soul and my

Creator, no creature can dare step in. I cannot, I dare not deny God ! ”

“ Will you reëxamine every step of ground you went over in your mad career to Catholicism ? ”

“ If you wish it ; but I tell you beforehand it is useless.”

“ Mr. De Vere lunches here to-day ; he is skilled in argument. Will you see him ? ”

“ If you wish it. Father, hear me ! A religious vocation is the work of God, and not of man. God is stronger than man. Do what you will, my vocation remains firm and sure. I have but one thing to do in this world—to save my soul. This is the end for which I am here. Every thing around me I must simply use as a means to that end. A mechanic will choose the tool that will best help him to do his work, not the most beautiful instrument in his workshop. So I must, in like manner, embrace that life which will most surely lead me to my end. I have read and examined, again and again, to see if it was possible to remain in the Church of England. I could not find one place to rest my foot upon. There is no church but the Church of Rome, to whom only those divine words were spoken : ‘ When I go away, I will send to

you the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who shall guide you into all truth, and remain with you all days, even until the end of the world.' ”

“ Foolish boy ! unless you obey me, you know your fate.”

“ Deliberately I choose. The Church of Rome is my choice. I throw on one side your wealth, position, and pleasure, for God is dearer to me than all.”

Edward Lascine was alone.

Good old Mr. Treven strolled into the conservatory. Eddy was deep in thought.

“ Eddy, reach me those white camellia-buds for your mother's hair to-night.”

“ Willingly, dear uncle.”

“ Thank you, my brave boy ; now a frond of fern for May's bouquet. I love to have you here, Eddy, even as a ' pope's kitten '—that's John's name for you, isn't it ? ”

“ I don't mind his fun ; he is a dear old fellow.”

Mr. Treven looked up. “ Why that sad face ? ”

“ Papa and I have been talking. You know, uncle, I cannot conscientiously do what he wishes.”

“ Then I wouldn't do it, my boy. God is very

dear to you"—the old man turned away to wipe his eyes. "How your mother has wept over you! Your own heart has bled, too, to give her sorrow—I saw it. I see deeper than most people. Kiss me, boy, kiss me, and pray for your old uncle when he is dead."

Passing into the drawing-room, the Rev. Mr. De Vere and the gentlemen guests were arguing on truth. They called for Mr. Treven's opinion.

"I send a delegate, Mr. Edward Lascine."

The Rev. Mr. De Vere pulled down his white cuffs, pursed his lips, adjusted his white tie, played with his watch-chain, and then said:

"Now, Mr. Delegate."

"O uncle, excuse me!"

"No, sir; go on. Let's hear Rome on the subject."

The Rev. De Vere frowned.

"What is your question, gentlemen?"

"What principles evolve truth?" the reverend gentleman rolled forth, sonorously. "Let's hear your teaching, sir?"

"If you wish it, gentlemen."

The musical voice of Edward Lascine swept

through the room. The ladies dropped their light employments and listened. Even hard philosophy seemed softened by his tones.

"Three principles concur to evolve truth and beget certitude—to wit, principium a quo, or the subject of certitude, which is the intellect. Secondly, principium per quod, or the instrument, which is multiplex, for notions come to us through many channels. Thirdly, principium quod, by which truth is distinguished from falsity, or the motives begetting certitude—all which motives are reduced to head of evidence."

The Rev. Mr. De Vere sniffed haughtily as he asked for a definition of "principium per quod."

"We are coming to that, sir. Principium per quod, or fount of truth—they are: 1. Sensus intimus; 2. Sensus externi; 3. Ideas. The mind reflects on these last and grasps relations of things: (1), by immediate comparison, whereby it connects universal principles; (2), by mediate, or ratiocination. 4. By testimony of men."

"Bravo for my delegate!" old Mr. Treven said.

Mr. De Vere reddened.

"Ah, De Vere," said John Lascine, "an English Parson beaten by a 'pope's kitten!'"

A roar of laughter followed this remark, and the first luncheon-bell stopped the conversation.

Sternly Mr. Lascine bade his son farewell.

Lovingly was he folded to his mother's bosom, and the tears rained down over him. Gentle May wept for the double loss she would feel now. John looked sad. And poor old Mr. Treven was not seen for hours. A blank seemed to have fallen over the House. Though no one spoke openly, the thoughts of all went that night to the College of St. Osmund. Mrs. Lascine paid a visit to her son's room, where the flowers still sent up their perfume at the foot of the crucifix. With that perfume her prayers ascended to the altar in heaven.

CHAPTER X.

THE COLLEGE.

"FATHER CLARE, do not think I have fallen. 'De excelsis cogitationibus et actibus heroicis filiorum Dei.'"

"I cannot think so, Edward, if I would. But 'all the miserable anxiety,' as the Curé d'Ars tells us, 'about the means of carrying on this work comes of our still having some lurking dependence on our natural powers and gifts and possessions—the boats and nets which we have left to follow Christ. It comes of our still creeping timidly along the shore, instead of casting ourselves boldly on the broad ocean of his Providence, whose mighty hand is ever stretched out for our support, and whose unchanging voice breathes in our ears: "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?"'"

"And so you thought at Treven I should give in, after two years' fighting, Father Clare?"

"It has not been without a struggle you are here to-day; your blanched cheeks tell the tale. I feared for you—this sorrow, the intense love you bear your mother, and the extensive grounds of Treven Manor, with the means of gratifying your love for the beautiful in art."

"You forget that Edward Lascine has not, and would refuse any ancestral Halls but the ancestral Halls of his Vocation—the ancestral Halls of Heaven."

"'Perfect through suffering,' you know, if you choose still to follow your Master."

"I came to tell you of my visit home."

We pass over this conversation, dear reader; we have been with him.

At the "Ave Maria" two heads were bowed down before the Adorable Sacrament in deep prayer. Father Clare was there, and Edward Lascine.

A glad welcome was the welcome of Edward Lascine back to St. Osmund's, but he seemed to give more of his time to the Church. The altars glowed with bouquets, arranged so carefully with

the glad summer-flowers. He said little, studied harder, and a kinder spirit seemed to have come over him. All the people he had not cared for before he now walked with.

Frank Carley was chaffing him with this, one day :

"I never saw such a change in any one as in you since your visit home. How you can walk with such creatures, I can't think."

Even quiet Edmund Ede said : "Yes, Lascine ; you have cut me for the last day or so, to walk with people you can't care for. You were actually walking with Peter Decan and Robert Weed all play-time to-day."

"The fellows like you all the better for it, though," said Carley.

"I sha'n't tell what flattering remarks I heard some fellows make," said Paul Wright.

"I cannot help it. I don't want to belong to a clique any longer, and be singular. I see that kindness is God's shadow, great and broad, falling softly and sweetly over the whole world. And now I have seen that kindness of Jesus, I am dying to be kind to some one. I do not care any longer for people being kind to me. I only want to be kind

to them—to be kind always, and to be kind to everybody.”

The days glided quickly into weeks, the weeks into months, and the same quiet life reigned at St. Osmund's.

A Society of St. Vincent de Paul had been established in the college, and one of its steadiest workers was Edward Lascine. Paul Wright, too, worked together with him. They chose the lowliest district, and the two half play-days in the week were devoted to this. Many a quiet blessing followed them, many a hungry family to this day speak of them with tears of gratitude standing in their eyes.

Edward Lascine would come in, tired and weary with his long district walk, glance at the merry group in the cricket-field, who shouted for him to join them, and pass on to his study or the sacristy-work.

Even the President at last spoke to him about taking more recreation.

“Well, Monsignore, I will do as you say;” and the hour after dinner he vied even with Robert Weed in the sports.

His room was a study. The Duchess of Gra-

ham had had it arranged for him. The carpet and table-cloth were green, the curtains crimson rep. Three exquisite pictures were on the walls—St. Osmund, St. Ignatius, St. Dominic. A statue of the Virgin on a bracket with a lamp burning before it. On the table a large carved crucifix, with a white figure shining out from the ebony, which made it the most prominent object in the room. On the mantel rested a statue of St. Ignatius, in bronze, by its side two candelabra of solid silver, marked with the Treven arms. In one corner a bookcase crowded with standard Catholic works. But the nameless "*quelquechose*" in the room on which the eye rested was a flower-stand arranged at the back of the table by the French window, always supplied with exotics, and in which cages of birds were interspersed with the flowers. A few chairs and a very hard mattress completed the furniture. "Too luxurious for me," Edward Lascine had said at first. "You must come down by degrees to the quiet life here," Monsignore Witton had said. "Under obedience, Monsignore, I submit."

On this special afternoon Paul Wright sauntered into his room.

"Ed, come down to Brill, and let us have a tea-party as a last mark of respect to Arthur Wills before he goes to Rome."

"When does he leave, Paul?"

"To-morrow."

"Then I'll come. I've got a presentiment all won't go well, though."

"He wanted me to ask you, Ed, because he thought you might refuse."

"Tell him I will go, and how sorry I am he leaves us. I really love him, Paul, because he is so thoroughly holy, and has such devotion to Our Lady."

"Carley and he have been great friends lately."

"Yes, that is the reason Carley has altered so much. He is not like the same man he was. He has lost all that nonsensical talk, and studies hard now."

"Carley will make a good priest, after all."

"Yes, indeed. St. Ignatius's remark will apply to him. Speaking of people of strong and impetuous characters, he says: 'One victory gained by them over themselves is to be preferred to an infinity of good works such as others perform without trouble in accordance with their mild and easy

disposition. They are generally the class best fitted for doing great things in God's service when they direct their natural impetuosity in the pursuit of virtue. For they are not content with doing what is ordinary, but are obstinate in resisting opposition, and never relax their efforts.'"

The quiet merriment of that party, the keen wit, and the enormous appetites ; the good hostess's services were required here, there, and everywhere, as ample justice was done to the provisions provided. The close, though, was sad, as the health of Arthur Wills was drunk in home-made wine for a prosperous journey. Lascine and Paul Wright were quiet, and so was Carley, for they all liked Wills.

"I wouldn't mind your going to Rome, old fellow, if you were less delicate, but I fear the voyage for you."

"Never fear, dear Lascine. Among the charming scenery and sweet flowers of Italy, I shall revive. Monte Porgio itself would pull my feeble frame together, much more Rome. I shall inhale the fragrance of the saints everywhere. In each street, in each church, I shall pray before some holy relic, and let us hope the virtue of their merits will do much for me."

"You must pray for us, too."

"Why should you ask such a question?"

"If I could choose a place to die in, Arthur, it would be Rome."

"I should not mind, dear Lascine. God's time, God's place, if only his rest follows."

"You are right, indeed; time and place matter little."

"Now, then, Arthur," called out Paul, "we are waiting for some music."

"What shall it be?"

"Silver Trumpets," by Viviani—"The Pope's March." How that march rang out, even on Mrs. Jewson's wheezy old piano, clear, calm, defiant!

"Ad majorem Dei gloriam!" he cried out, as they called for another repetition. The third time they obliged an *encore*. "Ad majorem Dei gloriam!" once more he cried, as, for the last time those fingers should touch a piano, or draw forth music on earth, that march rang out for the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

It ceased. Silence reigned in the room.

He seemed to have thrown all the energy and power of his love for music into that last per-

formance. He had thrilled and bewildered his audience.

Suddenly Edmund Ede cried out: "Half-past six, by Jove! Only half an hour to reach the college. We must run for it, or we shall have Father Irving down on us."

It was, indeed, a scene of hurrying now, as they chased over the hills to the college, rushed up-stairs to put on their cassocks, and arrived in chapel, with their flushed faces, as the bell rang for visit.

Arthur Wills was not at supper.

"We must say rosary directly," said Lascine to Paul. "I have so much to do in the sacristy to-night, and both the poor sacristans are tired."

"Not the head sacristan, either?"

"Yes, Paul, I am worn out with this long play-day and that party this afternoon. I hate to see Wills go away."

"So do I. He wasn't at supper, Ed."

"Doubtless he was tired out with the run home. It was thoughtless of us to miss the time; the physicians had forbidden him to run at all."

"Now for our rosary."

And they strolled out into the beautiful grounds with the words of prayer on their lips.

CHAPTER

THE DAY OF THE FUNERAL DAWNED CALM
AND STILL.

THE MORNINGS OF THE

"THEY WERE THE ONLY TWO WHO WERE THERE."

"THEY WERE THE ONLY TWO WHO WERE THERE."
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THE DAY OF THE FUNERAL DAWNED CALM
AND STILL. THE JULY SUN GLIMMERED IN WAY
OVER THE BEAUTIFUL GROUNDS OF TREVON.

What was it brought Paul Wright into the sacristy, with blanched lips, to Edward Lascine, half an hour later ?

“Ed, I want you, particularly.”

“What is it ?”

“Come with me ; let the others finish laying out the vestments.”

Lascine came.

Going through the long corridors, Paul, almost breathless, related how, after he had parted with Lascine, he had gone to Wills's room. He was moaning in pain on the bed, the blood pouring from his mouth and nose. There he lay, fast sinking into the sleep of the just.

“Paul,” said Lascine, “fetch Father Irving, and say not one word to any one.”

In a few minutes Father Irving was standing by the bed. Restoratives were applied. Doctors were sent for. In vain. As the physicians shook their heads, there arose to the mind of one of the watchers those words, uttered a few short hours ago : “I should not mind, dear Lascine. God's time, God's place, if only his rest follows.”

“At midnight the change will come,” the physician had said.

Round the bed and out into the corridor the Divines who lived in that wing knelt. Monotonously and solemnly the whispered "Litanies for the Dying" went up. The words of the "conditional absolution" were given, as at midnight that red stream ceased flowing. With eyes fixed on the crucifix, that young Levite passed, in "God's time, God's place," to God's rest.

Happy, holy Arthur Wills! Thou hast not gone to receive the Benediction of Christ's Vicar on earth, but thou hast gone to receive the benediction of Christ Himself in the Church triumphant. Thou hast not gone to pray before the relics of the saints in the Church militant, but to join the jubilant chorus in the Church triumphant. Thou hast not gone to recruit thy feeble body among the charming scenery and sweet flowers of Italy, but to gain thy reward, "that eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things God hath prepared for those that love him." And thou hast loved him; thou hast given him thy youth, thy talents, thy strength; and now the triumphant march of thine own ancestral halls doth greet thee as thou followest the Lamb whithersoever he goeth!

They clothed him in his cassock and surplice ; his biretta rested on his head.

"This room, Monsignore, is disarranged ; let us carry him to mine."

So he was laid out in the room of Edward Lascine, the beautiful exotics breathing around him as he lay there in his sleep.

As the first light of day broke at the altar of God, stood God's priest, Monsignore Witton, and the solemn sacrifice for the departed was offered. As the full day dawned, the side-altars were filled with the offerers of the Divine Victim clad in the sable vestments of the church suffering.

As the six o'clock bell rang, the Divines went round to the dormitories, and broke the solemn tidings to the younger members. Those pale, sad faces, that came to chant the "Office of the Dead." Those earnest prayers going up through the still morning for the increase of the joy and bliss of him who yesterday had knelt in their ranks.

Two days had passed.

Arthur Wills was laid under the high altar in the vault. An awe had fallen over the college, a silence even in the boys' "bounds." At all hours the church was occupied.

Father Clare, Paul Wright, and Edward Lascine, were sauntering through the grounds, when James the porter came up with a telegram.

"Well, James, who are you going to bother to-day with your telegrams?"

"Mr. Lascine, father."

Edward started as he took the telegram, and hastily broke the seal. His lips blanched, his whole frame quivered, as, in answer to the questioning looks of Father Clare and Paul, he said:

"My father!"

"Edward, sit down here a moment," said Father Clare, placing him on a rustic bench.

"Eddy, what is it?" said Paul.

"My—father—is—dying!" came forth in agonizing tones.

It was the telegram John Lascine had sent, recalling his brother home to their father's death-bed.

CHAPTER XI.

A PROMISE OVER THE DEAD.

Rest, rest so calm and bright,
Has fallen now o'er him,
From heaven's high door God's light
Fell o'er that face so dim.

THE AUTHOR.

"HE may linger some weeks, madam."

"Thank God! Eddy comes this evening; but his father cannot speak with him. Oh, that terrible hæmorrhage! The poor boy will feel it much, as he did not part with his father on the best terms at Treven Manor."

"He has had a hard time, that poor boy. Of course I coincided with you and Mr. Lascine in the notion to bring him back, but my heart has ached for him very often."

"I am beginning to think we dealt wrongly

with him, Dr. Pinton, since I saw that quiet, patient look of suffering on his face at Treven."

"It is not too late to advise you to turn over a new leaf, Mrs. Lascine. Unless you do, you may not have him with you long. This anxiety of mind will wear on his system, and prematurely age him."

"What time does his train arrive?"

"7.10, I believe. I will meet him, madam, and break the news to him—bad news, bad news." And the good old man looked out of the windows to hide the tears in his eyes.

"You will return, then, and dine with us. The carriage will go to the station for Eddy."

"It will be a sorrowful evening for you all. I will return with him."

"Will you telegraph for the nurses, doctor?"

"If you wish it. We shall require four, two for the day, and two for the night watches. They shall be here to-morrow, madam."

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"No train until four P. M.?"

"No, sir."

"Not even a luggage-train?"

"Yes, sir, in twenty minutes."

So Dr. Pinton was disappointed in meeting Edward Lascine, and he arrived at the station, one mile from his home, two hours before he was expected.

The station-master came forward to take out the portmanteau.

"It is you, Mr. Edward, isn't it?"

"Yes, Hendricks. Have you, and has Wather-ton, forgotten me?"

"No, sir. But it's many a long day since we've seen you—nearly two years, they do tell me, you passed your time at Treven."

"Not all, Hendricks. My father is ill, isn't he?"

"Yes, sir; very bad news come from the big house, to-day. Four physicians have been down to see him. That don't look much like hope. Oh, there's a many, a many'll regret him who has done so much for Watherton." And the old man wept.

The tears stood in Edward Lascine's eyes as he took up his hand-bag. "I'll send the dog-cart round for the portmanteau, later."

"As you wish, sir. I'll take good care of it."

Hastily he passed through the village. Few

seemed to recognize the young cleric, or turned and stared after him in surprise. Then they seemed to guess it must be "Mr. Edward," and called themselves fools for their denseness in not recognizing him.

Passing through the well-known paddocks, he was soon in the grounds of Watherton House.

What a lovely time to see his home once more, the old home of the Lascines! The long afternoon shadows trailed over the carefully-kept walks and lawn, and the air was heavy with the scent of the beautiful flowers, whilst, on the lawn, the old head gardener, Newton, was sprinkling some choice beds with his own hands.

"Not that heavy spout, you boy; you ought to know better; you break the blossoms," Newton was saying to the assistant boy.

"Not one word for me, Newton?"

The old white-headed man turned. A glad smile broke over his face. "Mr. Edward, Mr. Edward, is it indeed yourself? Thank the Lord! thank the Lord! Sez I to myself, 'I'll die, and never see my Mr. Edward again!'" And tears of joy rained down the old man's face as Edward heartily shook his hand.

"There's sorrow up yonder, sir"—the old man jerked his thumb toward the house.

"Hush, Newton! I must go."

The great tulip-tree on the lawn rustled its leaves pleasantly as he passed, and the deep shadow rested over his path, typical of the shadow over his life.

He passed into the house by the French windows, slung his hand-bag upon a *fauteuil*, and passed into the morning-room.

Lying back in a smoking-chair, under a cool piazza opening upon a tiny Swiss garden, was John Lascine, the blue smoke curling up around his handsome head, while a look of pain sat on his face, making it graver and handsomer than usual.

"Jack, don't you know me?"

"Don't I, though! My dear, dear old fellow, how glad I am you've come! Hang it, how pale you are, Ed; you'll scare 'the mother.'"

"I'm tired, Jack, and this news has stunned me." And, as he said so, he rested his aching head on his hands.

Jack touched a silver bell.

The footman responded.

"Bring some '47 port and biscuits for Mr. Ed-

ward ; tell James the carriage need not go to the station."

"Yes, sir."

In a few minutes the wine was upon the table.

"Ed !"

"Yes, Jack," a low, broken voice responded.

"Ed, drink some wine ; you want all your courage to support 'the mother' now. She takes this hard—awful hard. Ed, be a man !"

Jack took his brother's hand.

Edward Lascine's head was raised proudly.

"It is over now. I am seldom weak as that. Is he very bad ?"

"No hope, Ed."

The soft rustle of a dress, and Mrs. Lascine bent over her boy.

"Eddy, my boy !"

"My mother !"

Long and loving was that look exchanged between the mother and son.

"John, you have told him ?"

"Yes, mother ; he knows all now."

"Mother, I must see him."

"The sight of you might cause a relapse. You may go to his room, and sit behind the curtains ;

you can see him, and by degrees use him to your presence."

"All right, *maman*."

He bent down, kissed the white face lovingly, and went.

What is it to die? I have often heard it spoken of. I have often been the witness of it. Perhaps I have never understood it. Is death certain? Yes; nothing more certain. Faith teaches me this truth: "It is ordained for all men once to die." Reason convinces me whatever is composed of contrary elements must dissolve in the end. It is a general law of Nature: what has received existence by way of generation is the subject of corruption. Experience confirms it. The constant experience of all ages, of all days, who among men has been able to throw death on one side? We carry within us the seeds of death. And this natural feebleness which is in us, warns us that we have contracted the obligation of dying in being born. Oh! that I could cry with St. Paul, "Quotidie morior" ("I die daily"); so that, when the great change comes to me, it may be but the crown of my hopes—the crown of my daily deaths.

It was Sunday morning. The sound of the church-bells came softly into the sick-chamber at Watherton House; the dying man turned in his bed. Eddy, pale with his three weeks' watch, caught the slight sound that fell from his lips.

"Is it Sunday?"

"Yes, my father."

"Pray for me."

"Willingly, oh willingly, my father."

The voice of Eddy Lascine mingled with the glad sound of the bells:

"'And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun: for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever.' 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.'"

Only a few verses of the Apocalypse, for fear of tiring the invalid; then the prayers for the Dying, from the "Garden of the Soul."

"Thank you, my boy."

"I am going to take my bath, papa; then I will return."

Those sad eyes followed him lovingly round the room.

Eddy motioned the nurses to the bed, and left the room.

John was not made for a sick-room; he could not stay there long at a time. Mrs. Lascine and May were too delicate; they came often—but day or night, except a few hours in the middle of the day, Eddy did not leave his father.

Small, loving attentions. The tables, with the medicine and ice, each had its tiny vase of fresh flowers. Softly and noiselessly he moved about, and his cool hands seemed to ease the sick man more than the machine-like movements of the hired nurses.

“Eddy, what are you doing?” one day, after his arrival, the sick man said.

“I am praying for you, father, that God may spare or enlighten you; but you must not talk.”

Just then Mr. De Vere came to administer the Lord’s Supper.

Eddy left the room.

The sick man would not receive the bread and wine, or could not.

Day by day the boy grew paler and paler, but at meal-times he was gay and amusing. The half-hour he walked with his mother every day in the

grounds, his soul seemed to shine out clearer and more beautiful. He joyed because he was leading his father into the Catholic Church.

October 5th.—Mr. Lascine's birthday dawned clear and bright. The whole family were sitting with him.

"Where's Eddy?" he gasped out.

"He has just left you to take his bath and get an hour's rest."

"Send for him."

In a minute Eddy entered the room. "A glad birthday to you, papa," said he, "and many glad ones more through the long eternal ages in heaven!"

"In Christ my hope."

What matters? Why do I linger over a scene that carries such pain with it? A rich birthday-present that father received that day. He was numbered with the children of the one Holy Catholic Church.

It was evening. The lamp of life burnt very low; the bleeding came thicker and faster; and, as the holy waters of baptism sparkled on his brow, the glad light deepened in his eyes, and the innocence of his childhood was given to him. The nurses, at Eddy's word, had gone to the far end of

the room. No witnesses were there but the angels and the Eternal.

Gradually, during the night, that life stole quietly onward to its bourn—its rest. No fear now—all light—all joy.

During the early morning hours the breath came slower and slower. Eddy sent for Mrs. Lascine after he had said the prayers for the Dying. She sent for John and Mrs. Crowner. The frightened servants stood in one corner of the room. He was holding Eddy's hand and his wife's, speechless; those dark eyes glittered with joy as now and again Eddy stooped and whispered in his ear of the glories of the Church triumphant, of the helps through the great valley, to unite his agony with the agony of Christ.

The morning sun broke through a bank of crimson clouds, and the birds sang their morning hymn of thanksgiving; the scent of the flowers came in by the open window; but the red veil of the humanity of Mr. Lascine, which had hung between him and God, was severed.

Noiselessly a voice had summoned him—"Friend, come up higher."

He had entered into the joy of his Lord.

.

"Edward!"

"Yes, doctor; I am here."

"Stealing the best flowers, as usual."

"And for a good purpose—for my father's coffin."

"Your mother was asking for you. She is very ill indeed. Her one idea seems that you must drop this notion of the priesthood for three years, and travel."

"I cannot."

"Unless you do, I will not answer for her life. It may bring on disease of the heart. For your own sake I urge this. The last three years have altered you wonderfully. I consider it economy of health—"

"I cannot—I cannot!"

"Then you will be the murderer of your mother. Much as I love you, Edward Lascine, if any thing happens to her, never do I speak to you again! This is selfishness."

"I can give no answer now, Dr. Pinton. God only knows how dearly I love my mother; but I love Him more."

"Poor Eddy! I speak sternly. I know how you suffer; but this must be."

“ ‘*Quotidie morior.*’ I die daily. My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?” The crimson and white buds he held in his hand fell on the conservatory-floor; he shivered as though some cold wind blew on him. “*De excelsis cogitationibus, et actibus heroicis filiorum Dei.* Have I fallen so far as this from the lofty thoughts and heroic acts of the sons of God? If Father Clare only were here to advise me! If dear Father Ring—”

As he stooped to pick up the fallen flowers, his hand struck against a cactus, and the sharp prickles remained in his hand.

Involuntarily he sang to himself. John strolled in behind him, and listened. The words came from his poor, bleeding heart:

“ ‘All for thee, O heart of Jesus!
All the long, unending strife,
All the soul’s deep crucifixion,
All the weariness of life.’ ”

“Eddy, your hand is bleeding.”

“It is nothing, John. I struck it against a cactus just now.”

“Let me bind it up for you, and pull the thorns out.”

"Thanks. I wish you would pull the thorns out of my heart, too, Jack, old boy."

John's handsome eyes opened wider.

"How, Ed?"

"You see, John, Dr. Pinton has been here, and says *maman's* heart is set on my traveling three years. I cannot waste so much time in my studies for the priesthood."

"Ed, it must be. I tried to help you; but it must be."

"We will talk later about it, John. Thanks for your trouble. I have to finish my design for the coffin-lid, in flowers, and to say the 'Office for the Dead.'"

"Where?"

"By the side of our dead father, John."

He was kneeling by the dead, praying; the hot tears rolled through his hands, and blistered the pages of his book.

The door softly opened, and Mrs. Lascine entered leaning on the arm of her maid. Never had such a change appeared as in her stately figure. Eddy started as she bent over the corpse and kissed the cold lips.

She motioned the maid away, and, leaning on

Eddy instead, her frame shook with uncontrollable emotion.

"Eddy, by your father's side, your dead father's side, in God's presence, promise me you will never do any thing toward becoming a priest for three years."

"Mother!"

"Eddy, our circle is lessening now. If you leave me, you, my darling, I shall die. O Eddy, do not despise my wealth of love. All your dead father's love is yours now."

Once more that uncontrollable emotion shook the mother's frame, and great sobs burst from her.

"Mother, if it will comfort you, in Christ's name I promise."

"Kiss that cross in flowers you have made upon his coffin-lid to seal your promise."

He bent down low, and pressed his lips to the starry, white flowers.

Reader, were you in his place, would you have done otherwise?

CHAPTER XII.

THE TOUR.

THE Duchess of Mount Pleasant and the Countess of Castleton sat under the shadowy trees in the park at Brussels, during the concert of the military band. They were sitting in the Central Avenue; the streams of fashionably-dressed people passed and repassed almost unheeded.

"You had not heard of Mr. Lascine's death until a few days ago?"

"No, indeed."

"And he has been dead almost three months."

"Mrs. Lascine, Mrs. Crowner, and the boys, are staying at the Bellevue."

"Indeed, I have not seen them."

"They are only here three days, and Mrs. Lascine is very unwell. She was driving in the Bois yesterday; her widow's weeds make her look more charming than ever."

"You say the boys are with them. Is Eddy here, too?"

"Yes; and handsomer than ever. All the girls ask me who the superb young Englishman is who sometimes chats with me. Ernest Trevyllian is with Edward; they were inseparable at Oxford, and, directly it was known he was to make a tour of three years, Ernest obtained permission to go with him."

"The Duchess of Mount Pleasant, and too occupied to speak with us," said a cheery voice, close to them.

"Indeed!" said the good duchess, laughing; "never too occupied to speak with the Honorable Ernest Trevyllian, and only too happy to chat with Mr. Edward Lascine."

"Your grace is too kind," said Eddy, as he spoke, bowing low to the Countess of Castleton.

"Now, Ernest, you must occupy the Countess while Eddy and I speak on English news.—Then, my dear," said the duchess to her companion, "you shall have Eddy loaned you, and Ernest comes to me; so we shall arrive at the truth of all English news."

A kind, motherly interest beamed from the good duchess's face, as she conversed with Eddy.

"Mrs. Lascine is unwell? Tell her I am coming to spend this evening with her."

"Your grace will be welcome. Trev and myself go to Spa to-morrow for a couple of days. I shall go with more pleasure if I know *maman* is under such good care as yours."

"You are pale, Eddy."

"The sea-sickness, mayhap, in crossing the Channel."

"No, Eddy, no, my boy; old eyes such as mine read deeper. It is heart-sickness."

"We have had trouble lately."

"It is not that, my boy. Your heart is not here in these gay scenes; it is in the quiet of the past two years at the Catholic college you were at. I read it in each lineament."

What was it made the crimson flash to Edward Lascine's face, and die suddenly away? Was it the words of his friend? or was it the strains of the Pope's March, by Viviani, that rang through the park? Did he think of the last time he heard it, in the little room at Brill, on the wheezy piano of Mrs. Jewson? Or, did those words strike home?

He was deadly pale and silent for a moment.

She interpreted those looks differently, as she said :
“ Take the advice of an old woman : *Prenez toutes choses du côté le plus facile.*”

She did not hear the low whisper, and if she had she would not have understood it : “ De excelsis cogitationibus, et actibus heroicis filiorum Dei.”

“ Well, you ladies must excuse us ; we have promised to meet John Lascine and the Marquis of Marle on the Boulevard, and now we have only ten minutes. We are not *comme il faut* yet, because we have not been presented at the club.”

“ Often you’ll go there, when you are.”

As they strolled off, many an eye-glass was raised at them—the tall, graceful figure of Trevyllian, his splendidly-fitting clothes showing off his figure to perfection.

Edward Lascine, too, was remarked more closely—the black serge suit of clothes, the dark necktie, the only relief being the pale-lavender gloves, fitting faultlessly the small hands. The tiny feet, too, and the clear complexion, with the blue gleaming eyes, and the proud, graceful curve of the head, caused many a flattering remark to follow them.

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“ Trevvy, I cannot go ! ”

"Ed, this is nonsense; you must.—What do you say, Marle? He has never heard La Patti for three years; must not he go?"

"I'd go, Ed; you can escape early."

"I had promised to dine with Monsignore Chi-gi to-night. He is only here *en passant*."

"Nine will be early enough—you can leave him by that time."

"Whose box do you go in, Trev?" asked Marle.

"Read," said Trev, throwing a scented sheet of paper across the table, which he had picked out of a heap of such notes.

"Madame la Comtesse de Blois."

"You must go, Eddy; our Ambassador will be the only 'other' in the *loge*, and you have not yet met Amélie de Blois. They are the most Catholic family here, and Madame la Comtesse has several times asked me of you."

"I'll go, Marle, if you'll take my mother; and at nine, Trev, come to my room for me. I am in haste to see 'Le Nonce Apostolique,' to hear the Roman news. *Au revoir*; I'm going to dress immediately."

The beauty of Paris, London, and Brussels,

were crowded into the Grand Opera-House. At 8.30 the *avant-scène* opposite the royal box was occupied by Madame la Comtesse de Blois, Monsieur le Comte, and Amélie de Blois. Madame la Comtesse was a striking beauty ; to-night the yellow satin, trimmed with a paler tint of costly silk, set off her southern beauty to its full extent. The costly diamonds glittered in her raven tresses, and glinted in myriad tints on her fair neck and white arms.

" *Comme elle est belle ! C'est quelque chose magnifique !* " one heard on all sides, as the glasses were turned to the *loge*.

But by degrees one's eyes tired of the diamonds, and rested on the fair girl at her side, Amélie de Blois.

Had one dreamed of beauty, and sketched the ideal, the ideal was here. Long, blue-black hair, in natural curls, flowed over the fleecy white dress beyond the waist. Guiltless of ornament (but of a splendid figure), the pure Grecian features lit up with animation ; the heavy silk opera-cloak, with its golden fringe, resting on one fair shoulder, and the head slightly bent over the bouquet of white rose-buds. One crimson bud shrouded in her hair, just giving the necessary color to the entire figure.

The Count, a fine, handsome man, sat by his daughter's side.

"*Maman*, do you think he'll come?"

"*Qui, ma fille?*"

"*Monsieur Edouard Lascine, ma petite maman.*" Her face flushed as she spoke. She took out her jeweled watch, which sparkled again in the strong light of the chandelier: "*Neuf heure et quinze.*"

At that moment the door opened, and the Honorable Ernest Trevyllian and Mr. Edward Lascine were announced.

Edward Lascine was looking his best. The talk with the Nuncio of Paris and the news from Rome had flushed his face with enthusiasm.

The dress-suit fitted him perfectly. He wore no chain, no ring, no ornament; plain ivory studs, crossed by a gold bar worked with some Grecian pattern. Three sprays of lilies of the valley, with a waving, feathery fern-leaf, were fastened in a *négligé* manner in his dress-coat; pale-lemon gloves, fitting perfectly to his small, white hands.

Half an hour had elapsed, and, during the *entr'acte*, an animated conversation was carried on.

The Countess spoke:

"In honor of your Excellency's visit, and these other English gentlemen, I forbid a word of French in my *loge* to-night ; nothing but English."

The English Ambassador leaned forward to say some polite words to the Countess. Edward Lascine and Amélie were discussing the merits of various operas.

"A magnificent young couple they would make, Madame la Comtesse ; seldom have I seen such rare grace and beauty, both of body and mind, in two young people !"

A proud smile hovered over the mother's face.

"Mrs. Lascine made the same remark to me to-day."

Ernest Trevyllian caught this word as he was speaking with the count. A troubled look came over his face. At the same moment, in a box opposite, he saw the dark robes of Mrs. Lascine, and knew that the lorgnette of that lady was fixed on their box. Marle, also, was gazing intently at the fair picture.

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Amid the excitement of society in Paris, Moscow, and Geneva, Edward Lascine kept his calm, even manner. Whence did he draw this simplicity,

which attracted so forcibly? In the early light of the morning, while the fashionable world was sleeping, he was kneeling, making his hour's meditation in some church, and assisting at the Holy Sacrifice. Ernest Trevyllian was with him, and for months had been in no church but the Church of Rome. Seldom two such quiet, denying, unselfish lives were led in the fashionable world.

At St. Osmund's, in the early morning, good Father Clare offered weekly the Holy Sacrifice, that Edward Lascine might yet stand at the Altar.

When persons asked Father Clare for or of him, he would reply:

"Edward Lascine cannot fall. '*De excelsis cogitationibus, et actibus heroicis filiorum Dei.*' Suffering is his lot, much suffering." And tears would glitter in the good father's eyes.

CHAPTER XIII.

DEATH'S SHADOW.

IN the spacious mansion of the Comte de Blois, in the Avenue de l'Impératrice, the brilliant lights were glimmering. From the many windows, and in the terraced garden, the echo of joyous festivity broke the still hours of night. The gay world of the city of pleasure, Paris, had turned out *en masse* to the last grand ball of the season given by the Comtesse de Blois.

Eighteen months had elapsed since they were in Belgium, and now Edward Lascine was a frequent visitor at the house. Mrs. Lascine had been staying with the countess some time, and all her old beauty came back under the influence of Edward's presence, so that she held her shrine, at which society bowed low.

Amélie and Edward were great friends; a

brother-and-sister friendship had sprung up between them; they both loved every thing Catholic dearly, and were seen in company together with the Countess at most great functions. But that love on Amélie's part had strengthened and deepened into something stronger; she had fallen in love irrevocably with her graceful companion.

Her mother saw it, the world saw it; but Edward Lascine had plighted himself to another love; his soul was wrapped up in the Church, and daily he groaned over the rash promise given to his mother. He only saw in the fair girl something purer than most of the society he came across, and he studied that she should remain different from the artificial crowd around her.

As the traveler at times witnesses the blue gentian peeping up through the snow-wreaths in the heights of Alpine passes—a child of summer, where Winter holds his icy diadem—or as the antiquary at times discovers some rare bit of carving or tracery nestling amid the wreck or *débris* which encircles the old ivy-clad, loop-holed tower, so Edward Lascine saw this pure flower blooming out in the desert of the world, where all was fickle, heartless, artificial, and self-loving.

It was only this that made him treat her slightly different from the other ladies of his acquaintance; as to forsaking his vocation for one moment, the idea never entered his head. The whole household knew that in eighteen months he would enter a Seminary again. He had been candid with them; they accepted him on his footing, and he was content.

Mrs. Lascine had said: "Let it be so; his foolish ideas will soon melt away before your daughter's beauty."

A week before the ball, Edward strolled in with the Marquis of Marle. The ladies were discussing their dresses, as they had just arrived from Woerth's.

For Amélie there was a costly sheeny-green silk, almost white, with a rich creamy tint, Honiton-lace overskirt, looped up with aigrettes of emeralds, newly reset for the ball.

"Are you going to wear that, little sister?" said Edward. (He called her "little sister" now.)

"Yes, Edward; *maman* chose it, and dear Mrs. Lascine."

"Don't expect me to speak to you with that

robe on. It may be costly. It is not what I would wish my little sister to wear, though. And jewels—O Amélie!”

“What shall I wear, then, Edward?”

“If you will follow my advice, I will give it.”

“I will, indeed!”

“Something white, pure white—muslin, if you wish—and lace. I will send you the flowers for your hair—no jewels.”

So the conversation dropped, and the countess was only too pleased that Edward should suggest something.

A lovely Brussels-lace overskirt, with a soft, fleecy underskirt of some white material, which fell in soft waves over the long train.

Very beautiful she looked, as she stood waiting for the flowers Edward had promised. Her maid came in with a box upon a silver tray. Breathlessly she opened it. A bouquet of passion-flowers, of the largest and most beautiful kind, and worked in with them, so that each flower should stand out, were odorous white violets. For the head a simple cluster of the same.

Mrs. Lascine came in to inspect the toilet.

“How beautiful you are to-night, Amélie!”

"Yes, indeed," said the Comtesse de Blois. "Your son has more taste than we have. She will surely be the belle of the room to-night."

A buzz of admiration rose around the three beautiful women with their costly toilets. At Amélie's feet were the youth of Paris, each seeking some dance, to hold her handkerchief, her fan, her bouquet.

Edward Lascine stood by his mother—he and John had come in late.

"Amélie is very beautiful to-night, mother."

"Yes, indeed; and you have not spoken to her?"

"No, *maman*, not yet. I have to bid her good-by to-night. To-morrow Trev and myself start for Florence and Rome early; so I must get some rest."

"And you disappoint Queen Isabella?"

"I have already made my excuses to her majesty, and she has decorated me—she was so pleased to have me go."

The gratified mother gazed at the decoration.

"She will be here anon, then we shall know."

Just then the group around Amélie opened, and she beckoned to Edward with her fan. He passed to her side, and saluted her coldly.

"Mr. Lascine, will you take me to your *maman*? I wish to speak with her a moment."

"Yes, indeed, if you wish it."

The tiny gloved hand trembled on his arm.

"Thank you for this beautiful bouquet."

"And can my little sister be worldly, and forget she has the typical flowers of Christ's passion resting in her hand, while she receives so many compliments?"

"I knew your meaning in sending them. I shall not dance more than is absolutely necessary. I will keep the spirit of recollection you told me of as much as possible. Does my dress please you?"

"I never flatter, little sister. What can I bring you from Rome? Trev and myself start to-morrow."

"Only one thing I ask—the blessing of Christ's Vicar."

"That you will obtain. Now I must leave you with my mother. Good-by, little sister.—Good-by, *maman*." He raised his mother's gloved hand to his lips, and then placed it in the arm of Amélie, and was gone.

The color had faded from her face, the enthusiastic expression also; the lips were colorless.

"Amélie, remember how many eyes are on you," Mrs. Lascine said. "Silly child, he has only gone for a little while."

A proud flush returned to her cheeks as she imagined another knew her secret.

She was brilliant through the evening, but Mrs. Lascine saw beneath the surface, although her mother's eyes could not.

The Count sat in his library, the following day, in a recess, reading. The door opened, and in came his daughter. Her face was flushed with crying. She sat down on a low chair, put her head on her hand, and was motionless a long while. The Count was just thinking of going to her, when a low wail burst from her :

"O Eddy, Eddy ! je l'aime, je l'aime, si c'était possible—mais—non—non—non ! L'église est votre épouse, et pour moi—je serais—seulement—votre—petite sœur."

The lace curtains waved softly in the gentle breeze, the rich exotics lent their sweet perfume to the suite of apartments occupied by the pale, suffering girl, who was dying to all appearances ; lan-

guid and spiritless, her beauty gained in spirituality what it lost in its richness. Very lovely was she in her pale-blue wrapper, with the rich flowers of Italy in her hand. They were in Florence, trying what that atmosphere would do toward the restoration of their daughter. Amélie de Blois, for it was she, had been ill since the night of her great success in Paris—hardly ever had a success been so thorough as hers.

To all the offers of marriage that had come since then, she had turned to the Count with these words: "O papa, do not ask!"

And he did not, for that scene in the library was before him; day and night he heard that low wail of sorrow.

"Change may save her—change only," the physicians had said. When that had failed—"Some secret malady which is not fully developed yet. Italy may save her."

To Italy they came. She was no better; and the world spoke of the beautiful girl in low tones. She was dying—sinking slowly from that lovely land to a land unbound by sky, bound in only by the immensity of God.

All the gifts and pleasures that wealth and rank

could give were lying at her feet unheeded. Mrs. Lascine tended her as though she were already her daughter, and her mother would turn to Mrs. Lascine and ask, with tears trembling in her beautiful eyes, "Will she die? will she die?" And each day as the mail came in with the many scented Parisian letters—in each one that question would be asked, until the Countess's heart sank within her, and she gazed at the pale, uncomplaining girl with a tender yearning—knowing who, by one word, could give her a new existence.

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CHAPTER XIV.

LONDON—FLORENCE—ROME.

IN the brilliantly-lighted reading-room of the "Oxford and Cambridge University Club," the Honorable Ernest Trevyllian was patiently waiting the arrival of Edward Lascine.

Impatiently he took out his handsome watch, and glanced at the hour. "Six-thirty; what can detain him?"

"Can it be Mr. Trevyllian?" a solemn voice croaked out at his elbow.

Trevyllian looked hastily up.

It was the so-called "Father Enson," of the Established Church of England, holding a living in the city of Oxford.

Ernest Trevyllian bowed to him. "Mr. Enson, I believe?"

"He, he, he! yes, it's me. It's a long time since we've met."

"I have been traveling with Mr. Edward Lascine, whom I dare say you may remember."

"Yes, Mr. Trevyllian, I remember him. How could I forget," said the reverend gentleman, sighing deeply, "one of my former penitents—the one who gave me my beautiful Easter chasuble? I wore linen ones until that came—to accustom the people, you know, Mr. Trevyllian. Now, you would be surprised at the advances we have made—daily mass, sir, daily mass—the colors kept in altar-cloth and chasuble—and so many penitents—confessionals erected in our church."

"Indeed! we have not been to Oxford lately."

"And, Mr. Trevyllian, how progresses your soul?"

"You are neither my confessor nor director, sir, and must excuse my answering that question."

"You are not, I hope, sir, about to follow the mistaken policy of Mr. Lascine—to leave the church of your baptism for the corrupted Church of Rome? Would we were one, I say, but we cannot be so, so long as we see the pernicious errors intermixed with 'the faith once delivered to the saints.'"

"We may end this discussion, Mr. Enson, by

my telling you I believe no longer in the sacramental system of the Church of England."

The reverend gentleman was silent for a minute, then, holding out his hand to Trevyllian, said: "Be assured I will say mass for you to-morrow."

As he turned his back, Trevyllian smiled good-humoredly. "And be assured I shall assist at mass to-morrow," he said, softly, to himself, as he again glanced at his watch. He exclaimed: "Seven o'clock! what can detain him?"

"Trev!" It was indeed a pale face that met his gaze, but it was the face of Edward Lascine. "Have you dined, Trev?"

"No, not yet; that confounded old Enson came and talked to me until I felt like kicking him."

"Tush! be charitable."

"Only for you sake, old man."

"Come to Brooks's—let's dine there. It's quieter, and I have something to tell you."

"All right; my 'hansom' is waiting below; but we mustn't disappoint Cecil de Grey."

"Two hours before nine yet."

"Lascine, what is the matter?" asked Trevyllian, as they bowled by St. James into Pall Mall.

"Wait a moment, Trev—sorrow enough—wait until after your dinner."

"Poor Eddy, must it always be in your life that 'tears are akin to laughter?'"

"No, Trev; I am always glad when I have you near me. Your clear head gets me out of many a scrape."

The dinner was over, and still they sat in the dining-room at Brooks's. The light from the lustres gleamed and glittered in the cut-glass and over the silver plate.

"*Garçon, une bouteille de Pouilly et d'autres verres.*"

"*Très-bien, monsieur.*"

"*Et, garçon, deux demi-tasses et deux petits verres de cognac.*—And now, Ed, for the details, after fortifying ourselves against fainting."

Edward Lascine said nothing, but, taking from the pocket of his dress-coat two coroneted envelopes, passed them over the glittering plate to his companion.

"From Florence, eh?" He opened one. It was from the Comte Eugène de Blois, giving that scene in the library in Paris, with the graphic description of a Frenchman. The doctors' latest

opinions. "Would Edward join them immediately, and bring his friend, the Honorable Ernest Trevyllian?"

The second letter, from Mrs. Lascine, pleading with all a fond mother's skill, to the heart of her son for the beautiful girl who was dying. Only Edward's presence could save her," she ended; "only you, my son, can give life back to this beautiful girl, who loves you dearer than her own life. You only can give joy to your mother's heart. The count and countess will gladly receive you as their son-in-law. Come to receive your mother's blessing."

"Poor Trevvy, you look pale, too! I saw my confessor at Farm Street—that's what made me late coming to you at the club. We must start tomorrow early."

"Les chevaux sont-ils arrivés, garçon?"

"Oui, monsieur; je les avais commandés pour huit heures et demi. Tout est prêt; vous n'avez qu'à monter en voiture."

"We must make short work of Lady de Grey's grand 'At Home,'" said Lascine; "we must start at daybreak;" and no other word passed until the elegant "brougham" dashed up to the stately mansion of the De Greys'.

And at daybreak they were on their way to Florence.

The hot sun was gleaming over Florence. The rich vegetation, brilliant flowers, and stately trees in the garden of one of its beautiful suburban villas, seemed to have been attended to with more than ordinary care, and as the soft breeze swept along, and carried its rich burden of perfume through the almost closed lattices of the French windows, an insensible feeling stole over one of laziness, and a desire to throw one's self into one of the many comfortable lounges in the morning-room, and inhale the pure, cool air, and "do as the Italians do" in those soft, sunny days—dream over the beautiful on earth, in air, and sky. Two soft voices were heard in the long corridor of the house—those of the Comtesse de Blois and her daughter.

"He telegraphed to say he was coming, *ma-man*?"

"Yes, my darling; Mr. Lascine and Mr. Trevilian will be here to-night."

The pale color left her cheeks, and a soft, crimson flush of joy took its place. The eyes shone joyfully as the glad mother supported her into the

morning-room. Already she seemed to perceive the new life of health clothing once more the beauty of her child.

Mrs. Lascine came in, the long black train sweeping the floor, and in her hands a basket of white violets.

"Where did you get those lovely violets, Mrs. Lascine?"

"I ordered them some weeks back for Eddy's room, dear *Amélie*."

"Do let me see them, dear Mrs. Lascine," and she took the basket, and buried her face in them. "May I have some for my hair to-night, and enough for a tiny bouquet?"

"Yes, dear, if you like; but color becomes you so much more."

"Oh, I would rather have these violets—they are so lovely, and he likes them."

"Take what you wish, dear, and send the rest to my rooms later on."

The sun was sinking in its beautiful couch of crimson cloud-land, touching with soft tints of crimson, gold, and purple, as it only does in Italy, the surrounding scenery, when the carriage of the family drove through the beautiful garden to the front entrance.

Its occupants were Edward Lascine, Ernest Trevyllian, and the Comte de Blois.

"Now, straight to your rooms, gentlemen; dinner in twenty minutes. Not one word to a soul—no, not even to the ladies."

Mrs. Lascine was waiting in Edward's room.

"My darling boy!"

"Why, *maman*, you are getting more beautiful than ever." As he said this, he held her at arm's length, and gazed lovingly at her. The soft tulle dress of black gave her complexion a whiter tint, and the red japonica in her hair and at her breast showed him she had followed his taste.

"Now I must run away, my boy; I shall see you alone to-morrow."

What a hearty welcome those two travelers received in the drawing-room. Amélie's eyes were fixed on the door until Edward appeared. She did not rise as he entered.

"Little sister, you have been ill?"

"Yes, Mr. Lascine."

"I must congratulate my little sister on her taste in dress," said he, as he glanced at the white violets in her hair, and the simple white muslin with its costly lace. She was very beautiful in-

deed that evening ; the excitement of her wit gave a strange charm to that first evening at Florence. She was running her white fingers over the harp, and her sweet voice rang out in the quiet Italian night in those words of Dante's :

“ Nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice—
Nella miseria.”

The French windows were open wide, and the soft strains came to Madame la Comtesse de Blois and Ernest Trevyllian as they were walking in the piazza. The night air had drawn out the scent from the lemon-trees, and the whole atmosphere was flooded with its delicious incense.

“ I should grudge giving him up to any but madame's daughter ; what influence I have, though, I will use in your favor, but to me it seems hopeless that such a thing should ever be.”

“ Thanks for your candor, Mr. Trevyllian ; but we may number you among our allies ? ”

He bowed in silence.

“ So you go to the Vatican this morning, Edward ? ”

"Yes, *maman*. Trev is to be presented on his reception, and, as I have been before, and am his friend, Monsignore de Merode suggested I should go with him."

Two days before, at Santa Sabina, by one of the good Dominican fathers, Ernest Trevyllian had been received into the bosom of our Holy Mother, the Church. This day he had made his first communion, and was to be presented at the Vatican at the private audience which had been arranged some days before.

A large suite of apartments had been taken in the Via del Babuino for the Comte de Blois and his party. At the breakfast-table that morning the talk was of Rome.

"In no place in the world is there to be found so much liberty with so much security, my dear mother. Every one doesn't here make a dogma of his own ideas, and a Church of his own party, as in dear old England. Uncle Treven, writing to me from Treven Manor, says the same. He says he once heard Père Lacordaire, the great Dominican preacher, talk of Rome, and he said: 'Passions roused at a distance, when they seek to glide in here, die away like the foam on the sea-shore.'"

“*Vous avez raison, mon cher ami ?*” said the Count.

“We are going to the Catacombs when you return, to show them to Mrs. Lascine,” said Amélie.

“San Callixtus. Very well; we shall not be gone long.”

In the private apartments of His Holiness our two friends were received. The language spoken was French. The interview was almost at an end, when the pope laid on the table three crosses. One of gold, with a rich reliquary, which he blessed and gave to Trevyllian; taking a similar one and placing it beside the two others—one being of silver, also with relics, and the other of iron—he said to Edward Lascine :

“My child in Christ, my dear son, we have heard of your endurance in Rome. We would wish to give you some mark of our affection. Choose which crucifix you will, my son, and I will place it on your neck with my own hands, to bind you more strongly to your crucified God.”

Without one moment's hesitation, he stepped forward and chose the iron crucifix.

“Why this, my son ?”

“I am going to be a Jesuit, my father—this is

why I choose it ; otherwise I must give it up in the novitiate."

The tears glittered in the eyes of His Holiness as he gave his benediction to those two children of the Church. His parting words were :

"Our Saviour wore his crown of thorns, Rome's pontiff wears them in his tiara, and you, the children of the Church, wear yours ; but you shall triumph even though you have heavy crowns of thorns to bear ; and remember, it is written : ' Qui perseveraverit usque ad finem, hic salvus erit.' He only who perseveres to the end shall be saved."

So the weeks glided by in Rome. Now that the invalid of the party was so much restored, they spoke of leaving for England, and resting a few quiet weeks at Treven, before the season should commence in Paris.

Once more, then, the immense mansion in the Avenue de l'Impératrice was to be occupied again—occupied by gay life—occupied by the great king who comes alike to prince and peasant—the King of Terrors, Death.

CHAPTER XV.

A BRIDAL-REQUIEM.

IN the *couloir*, at the Grand Opera in Paris, stood the Marquis of Marle and Lord Cecil de Grey. As they strolled into the *foyer* during the *entr'acte*, Marle asked :

“By-the-way, Cecil, you go to the wedding to-morrow?”

“Of course; sad thing, isn't it, to see a good fellow like Trev done for?”

“Yes; I cannot make it out at all, though I always understood Amélie de Blois was in love with Lascine; but now he has gone to St.-Sulpice—awfully strict place—and now Trev is to be married to the girl I had always laid out for Eddy Lascine.”

“And Edward Lascine, instead of assisting at

the ceremony as bridegroom, assists in the very ordinary position of sub-deacon."

"How his poor mother takes it to heart."

"Yes, indeed; more than that, this was the day fixed by the Comtesse de Blois and Mrs. Lascine for his wedding."

"Poor boy, poor boy! even after his three years' travel he returns to his first choice."

"And they say this match is made up on Trev's part because Amélie likes Lascine, and on Amélie's part because Lascine likes Trev."

"Anyway, they are sure to be happy. They are good Catholics, and will have the prayers of Eddy Lascine all his life long."

"That's sure."

"Well, *au plaisir*, old man, until to-morrow, and the wedding ceremony."

Gayly the sun broke on the morrow—the wedding-morn of Amélie de Blois. The organ pealed through the aisles of Notre-Dame in floods of sound. As the bridal party entered the church, from string- and brass-bands and organ the "Wedding March" rang out clearly and triumphantly.

The church was crammed with the "fashionables" of many countries to whom the young cou-

ple were known. A hushed thrill of admiration passed round as the beautiful bride entered the church. The long satin robe, looped up with white violets and orange-blossoms, while the costly Brussels-lace veil fell around her graceful form, and on the veil, worked for the occasion, one saw only the passion-flower. The long train of beautiful bridesmaids, clad in pure white muslin, looped up with passion-flowers and white violets. Very beautiful indeed was the scene—the handsome bridegroom, the “splendidly pale” bride. The mass was sung by the papal Nuncio; the sub-deacon was Edward Lascine.

The ceremony was over, and the Nuncio, with Edward Lascine, drove to the mansion of the Comte de Blois.

The gardens appeared a very fairy-land, and the magnificent house itself, with nothing but white flowers lining its corridors and rooms, seemed a fairy palace.

As His Eminence and Edward Lascine entered the reception-rooms, and went forward to speak to the bride and bridegroom, every eye was fixed on Edward Lascine to see how he would act. His cassock fitted to his splendid form, and his graceful

bow to his many friends, took off their looks from his face, which was pale as death. The Nuncio bent over him one moment ; he saw clearly what the world thought.

“ *Usque ad mortem, mon ami.*”

“ *Usque ad mortem,*” was the low, firm-breathed reply.

Trev grasped Edward’s hand.

“ Endless happiness to you, Trevvy !” and the tears glistened in his eyes.—“ Little sister, will you accept my wedding-gift ?”

“ Yes, my brother.” It was the first time she had used those words.

He took from the bosom of his cassock a rosary of snowy pearls, bound together by a golden chain-work—very costly, very beautiful.

She took the beads and fastened them in her girdle.

“ Thank you, my brother, my more than brother. You have taught me calm recollection ; these passion-flowers are interwoven with our life. I would not have them absent from my bridal, and Ernest wished it because of your taste.”

The bride and the bridegroom had departed,

and, as the evening came on, carriage-load after carriage-load of guests alighted at the mansion of the Comte de Blois. The merry laughter, the inspiriting music, the gay wit, every thing which the world defines as happiness, was present.

Marle, De Grey, and Ashley, met in the downstairs corridor. Marle's face was very, very pale.

"Come to the smoking-room with me, I want to see you. Hush! a telegram has just come from Blandain, on the frontier. The train Trev and his bride have gone by came in contact with another, and several carriages are thrown off the line. Now, Trev was in the second carriage from the engine, which must have been in the midst of the shock."

De Grey spoke: "It is useless doing any thing now, or frightening Monsieur le Comte or Madame la Comtesse. Let us see Eddy Lascine. He has most influence with them."

On making inquiries, they found Edward Lascine had left with the Nuncio after the wedding *déjeuner*.

"Well, let us keep quiet until the morning. Mayhap things are not so bad as we think."

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A few days after this, the Church of Notre-

Dame was crowded to excess by the fashionable world to assist at the bridal-requiem of Amélie Trevyllian, *née* De Blois. So grandly her beauty shone out in death, as grasping the rosary of pearls in her hands, clad in her sheeny satin wedding-dress, shrouded with the costly veil, she lay like one sleeping, waiting until her Lord should appear. A bride of death, indeed, whom we have loved—have loved—and lost.

Solemnly that mass of requiem echoed through those still aisles, broken only by the sound of the mourner's sobs. The great trumpet solo in the "Dies iræ" rang out, and eyes of worldlings, that had not shed tears for years, wept the bitter tears of the "sorrow which worketh repentance."

And so the fair dead was laid in the stately vault of her ancestors in the cemetery of Père-la-Chaise, the coffin covered with the beautiful flowers she had loved so well.

May God's bright rest have fallen over thee; mayst thou have joined that choir which wandereth among the lilies, and followeth the Lamb whithersoever he goeth!

In the mansion of the Comte de Blois the blinds are closed, the family have been absent for many a

long day. When one asks, "Where are they?" the response comes, "They are traveling with their son-in-law in distant lands, and with them is a pale, sad woman, who weeps often with the bereaved countess"—it is Mrs. Lascine.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHERE IS HE ?

A STRANGE heading for a chapter, is it not, dear reader ? Mr. Treven sits under the huge cedar-tree on the lawn at Treven Manor ; May Crowner and John Lascine are with him. By him, on a small rustic table, is a decanter of port and two glasses. The perfume from John Lascine's cigar curls up in the pleasant evening air. John's face is troubled, more so than usual, as he gulps down a mouthful of port, and, holding the glass up to the light, admires the rich color.

"So, Eddy wrote you, uncle ?" remarked Mrs. Crowner.

"Yes, my darling ; he wrote me" (and the old man's voice quavered), "telling me his final resolve frankly and candidly. I admire that boy—I admire him !"

"Who can help loving darling Eddy, uncle? There must, indeed, be a strange, fantastic power in the Church of Rome to make Eddy endure all he has endured."

"It is *the* Church, the Church in which I must die," he says. "So, in my old age, I must study the question while my boy is far away."

"Read us his letter, uncle," said John.

The old man took from his pocket, and slowly unfolded, the soft, foreign paper:

"ST.-SULPICE, PARIS, }
FEAST OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF OUR LORD. }

"MY BELOVED UNCLE: Thanks for the closely-written pages of yesterday, which have carried me in spirit to Treven Manor, and to the midst of you all; but now, after my long travels, and my exile from the Sanctuary of God, it is time—time, indeed, dear uncle, I am about 'my Father's business.' As your version has it, 'Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?'

"You were surprised I did not succumb to the many temptations in the world. Did you really think, dear uncle, I could fall—'De excelsis cogitationibus et actibus heroicis filiorum Dei?' The fair Bride I have chosen, God's Holy Church, gives

me the strength of the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom our sweet Master at his ascension promised should remain always with Her. In his strength I do and dare. Looking straight to God, I am perfectly indifferent as to whether I go to Him by health or sickness, by riches or poverty, by honor or ignominy, by a long life or a short life, so long only as His blessed will be done, and I correspond to the graces He has given me.

“A mechanic will choose the tool that will best help him to do his work. I should, in like manner, embrace that life which will lead me most securely to my end, which is *God*.

“What life will I choose? Where will I do my work?

“I shall join the Order of Jesus. I shall go wherever I am sent. I shall ask to be sent to some far missionary country—Japan, China, Western America. Look back, dear uncle, three hundred and thirty-four years ago! See a man, dressed in military garb, kneeling at the feet of Mary the Immaculate, Mother of God, praying in language that burst from his very heart. He rises a new man. St. Ignatius Loyola had then and there, at Mary’s feet, renounced all the fame of his military ex-

plaits, wealth, rank, worldly position, the pomp and fascination of the world, the pride of life, the stern cravings for the Cæsar and Napoleon like ambition for glory which was so strong in his nature—all was extirpated. In its place, there burned a love for the 'crucified Master, whose name the society which he founded bears—the *Order of Jesus*.

“Read, in the life of this great saint, which you will find in my study at Treven Manor, of the career and heroic deaths of his first disciples. See them crossing the Atlantic, penetrating the wilds of North and South America, defying the storms of the wide Pacific Ocean, reaching the shores of Asia, penetrating the far interior of Japan and China, and planting the cross of my sweet Jesus before they suffer martyrdom. All this, dear uncle, before the Church of England and the many sects—tributaries—were conceived in the womb of Time.

“What strikes me most in this society, is—

“Firstly. The self-renunciation of its members, which presents a marvel to the world.

“Secondly. The unparalleled intellectual abilities exercised for the elevation of the whole human race.

"Thirdly. For strong moral heroism, no persecutions, not even the most cruel martyrdom, can intimidate, or make them abandon a love of their Divine Redeemer.

"Fourthly. I am going to seek my sanctification in the Society of Jesus. It has no corporal penance like the Order of St. Dominic. It has no long fast and vigil like the Order of St. Francis, but it has something far harder—the *renunciation of the will at every moment; the continual death of all that has most life within us.*

"Do not think I shall bid you all farewell without a pang. My heart is wound around the occupants of Treven Manor and Treven itself. Holynton and Watherton also fall in for a large share of my love.

"I heard from my darling mother two days ago. She speaks of a speedy return from Egypt. Madame la Comtesse de Blois (she says) is crushed with sorrow at the death of Amélie (my little sister). Tell May she must not be jealous. Poor Trev is broken-hearted at his loss. He will become a religious, too, and give his young years to God.

"And John is still at Treven. Why hasn't he visited me? Tell him St. Sulpice and his brother

will welcome him. And May, dear May, kiss her, and make much of her for me.

“Inquire into the truth of the Church, dear uncle, before you die. It is *the* Church, the Church in which you must die.

“Ever, dear uncle,

“Yours fondly in Christ,

“EDWARD LASCINE.”

The old master of Treven bowed his head on his hands as he folded the letter, placed it in his pocket, and was silent for some time. Slowly the blue clouds of smoke curled round the head of John Lascine. May's head was turned away, and thus the news of the final resolve reached Treven Manor.

The talk now in the circle of the Trevens and Lascines was of the bright young life that had hidden itself in the shade of the Church. The Duchess of Graham was often written to by Oxford men to know what had become of Edward Lascine; but by degrees the curtain of fashion closed over him, and it was as though he had never existed, except now and again that Mrs. Lascine and the Comtesse de Blois had reëntered society, his name would be men-

tioned, and they would be asked what had become of him.

In many loving hearts his remembrance was buried, and that world looked forward to the time when he should emerge as God's anointed priest from the shade of the cloister.

CHAPTER XVII.

ARKANSAS PRAIRIES.

FIVE horsemen are galloping over the Western prairies of Arkansas, trying to make for Duvall's Bluffs before sunset. The great crimson sun is gradually sinking below the horizon as a familiar voice—the voice of the Marquis of Marle—breaks the silence :

“These confounded Texan horses will oblige us to give in ; this merciless “lope” is killing me. What wouldn't I give for my English hunter just now !”

“Yes, Marle. I'm awfully hungry, and I can see one of those hideous ranches ahead where we must sleep huddled together like so many pigs in a sty.”

“No more of your jolly American-prairie tours for me—confound it, no ! I'm starved, jolted to death on this apology for horse-flesh. The first

station (or 'depot,' as our American friends say) I come to, I get on the train and join my companions in Texas. Trust Maurice Ashley for that!"

"Hullo, Vincent! how are you, eh?"

"I'm speechless with disgust. I shall certainly follow Ashley's example."

"That settles our ranching it another night. It's a pity we have left the team so far behind to-day, or we might have ranched it charmingly in our own tent, in this gorgeous moonlight—only I am afraid Ashley wouldn't cook again."

A roar of laughter went round, in which Ashley joined.

In a few minutes they drew rein at the ranch they had been making for. A pleasant Irish-woman stood in the door-way, surprised at the unusual occurrence of five horsemen coming up.

"Can you accommodate us with lodging, my good woman, for the night?"

A man's head emerged into sight.

"Are ye from the ould countree?"

"Yes, my good man."

"Ye're wilcome thin, my honies," and the man came out to "hitch" the horses to the fence, and give them the best accommodation he could.

They were sitting now round the hearth, and the brands of woods blazed up fitfully. The washing had commenced in the one tin basin which had passed in turn through the hands of all. Marle had grumbled at the little water that came to his share.

An hour later they were sitting at supper—pig, corn-bread and dried peaches, washed down with milk.

The good woman was waiting on them to the best of her ability.

“Be ye Catholics?”

“Yes, of course,” said Ashley, very gravely, winking at Marle.

“Thin ye’ll goo to the Holy Mass to-morrow, at the Church on the Prairies, only six miles from here. We go in the waggin—ye can cum with us.”

“By Jove! yes, my good woman. But is to-morrow Sunday?”

“Yes, sur.”

That night the five tired men slept in the shanty off the ranch. I doubt if one would have slept sounder in the soft feather-beds of the mansions in the old country.

The morrow found them on their way to mass in an ox-wagon. Very, very merry was that ride over the prairies, and when the little wooden frame-work church, with its cross above, came in sight, with its crowd of uncouth wagons, mules, Texan ponies, tied around, the five strangers became very interested in the scene. They entered the church. The tiny altar, covered with its white sheet, adorned with gorgeous prairie-flowers, before which this crowd of settlers and Indians were bowing their heads in prayer, waiting their turn for confession, was very striking. The priest was in the confessional then, and they seated themselves, watching the congregation growing larger and larger, until the church was full, and men, women, and children, knelt out on the prairie in the soft sunshine.

The priest came to the altar—he was standing with his back to them during the commencement of the holy mass. The shaven tonsure proclaimed him a religious. As the first sentence of the mass was uttered, Marle raised his head and gazed. Surely some long-forgotten voice was falling on his ear. He was listening intently now. “Kyrie, eleison ; Christe, eleison ; Kyrie, eleison.” Yes,

indeed, he had no longer any doubt Edward Lascine was the priest at the altar,

As he turned to the people, and uttered the "Dominus vobiscum," Marle was pale indeed. In the long eyelashes veiling the modestly cast-down eyes, in the clear, emaciated face, he saw his friend, and, as he recognized the depth of that sacrifice, the beauty of the Catholic faith entered his soul, never more to leave it.

The others were equally grave and silent. A group of Indians knelt by De Grey, praying with heart and soul.

The time for the sermon approached rapidly. He was facing them now, his eyes seemed to flash as though he were alone with the Christ.

The quiet voice broke the stillness of the little church.

"'If any man serve me, let him follow me'—words from the twelfth chapter of St. John. 'If any man serve me, let him follow me.' From mine infancy buried in poverty—from mine early childhood shrouded in obedience—from my manhood darkened with sorrow, and the agonies of a living death—through mine whole life of purest chastity; this, dear brethren, the Christ requires of you, if

you would see Him when your existence here is over, and you are forgotten by those around you.

“Thus, then, must you follow Him in poverty, in chastity, in obedience, in sorrow. These four necessary ways of following Christ are the purple passion-flowers which spring up on Mount Calvary 'neath his cross. They are the crowns of light with which our brows shall be adorned in heaven. Each one of you must come forth to Calvary, and, in that great stillness and darkness which veils his cross, on that lone hill in which the only sound audible is, ever and anon, the dropping of the precious blood—there, there you must kneel and pick these beauteous flowers. God has placed in some of your hands the passion-flower of Poverty—rejoice! it is well with thee, thou art likened to Christ. Some of you must stoop to the cross and gather the flower of Chastity, for without this you cannot enter heaven. When thou hast gained thy prize, and art pure and Christlike—rejoice! thou hast achieved it through blood and tears. In Obedience. This passion-flower the Church places in our hands as children. If we keep it, and we keep it in faithfully obeying the commands of the Church, we must be saved. The passion-flower of

Sorrow! ah, who has not worn that? The pale faces, the trembling hands, the white lips of humanity, the agonizing look to our Father in heaven hourly ascending from his chosen people, tell us how necessary is this passion-flower to us. 'If any man serve me, let him follow me.' Whither? Even to the death—the death of his passions, the death of his affections, the death of all that has most life within him. So shall he exclaim, with St. Paul, 'I die daily!' Then only is he safe—then only has he followed Christ, for he has served Him. Christ says, 'Let him follow me.' Where? To the bedside of the sick and dying, to the cottage of the poor, to the sorrowing—noiselessly, unknown to those around us. Carrying our passion-flower of sorrow, we know how to bear the sorrows of others. But never can we suffer as our dear Lord has suffered—there are depths in his sorrow which poor humanity cannot grasp, there are mountains and peaks hidden in the clouds which his sorrow has grasped—ay, peaks so high which reach even to the mountain of God. There we cannot go, there humanity cannot reach, there we are not expected to follow Him.

“‘But, if any man love Him, he must serve

Him.' Grasp, then, with new energy to-day, my brethren, the faith delivered to you. Serve Him in poverty, chastity, obedience, and in the sorrows which come to all of you. So, traveling through the valley of His passion, you shall lay aside these purple passion-flowers for the crowns of light, for which the cluster of passion-flowers encircling each life is exchanged."

In the death-chamber of his old life we leave him.

"The outward, wayward life we see—
The hidden—none but God can know."

THE END.

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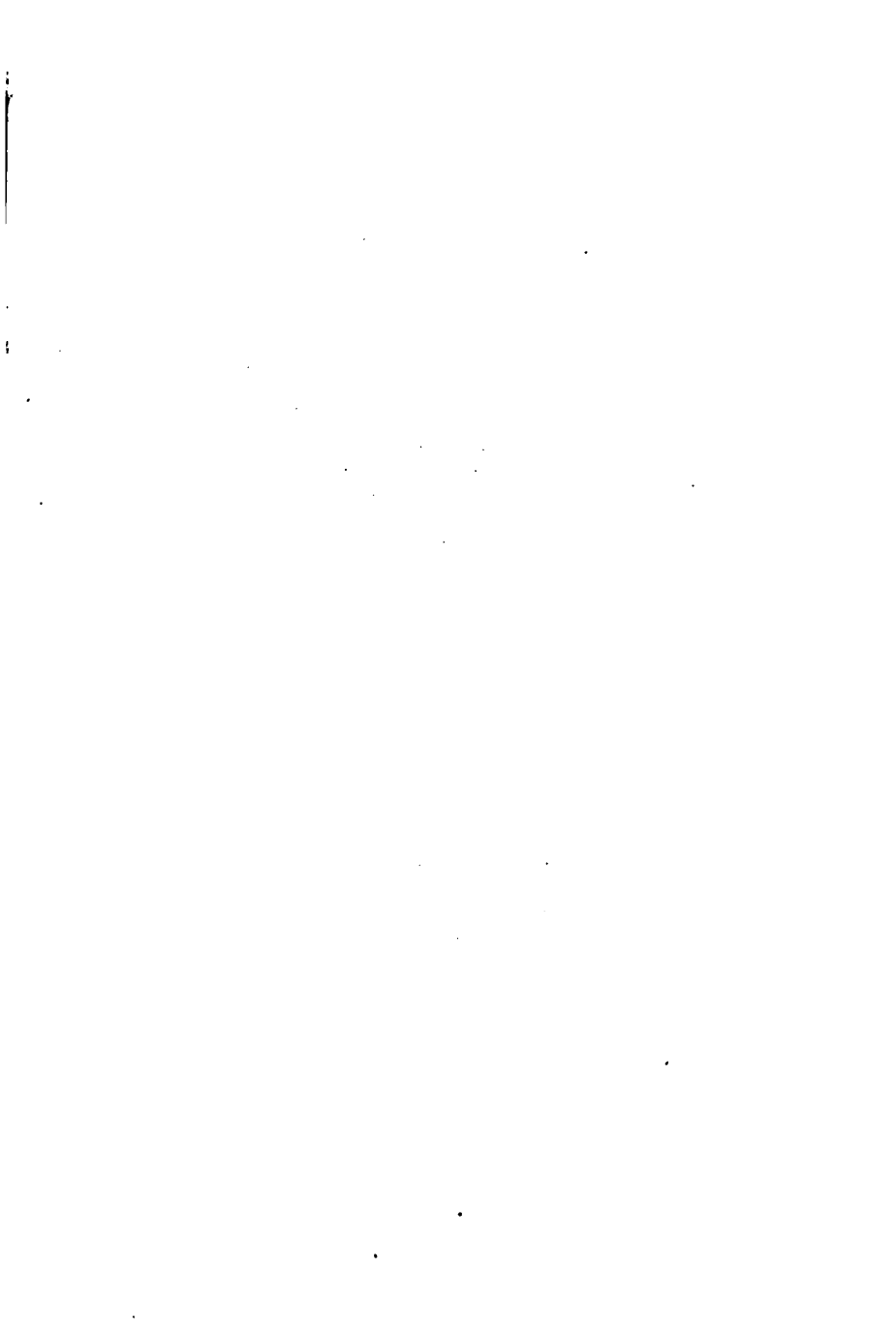
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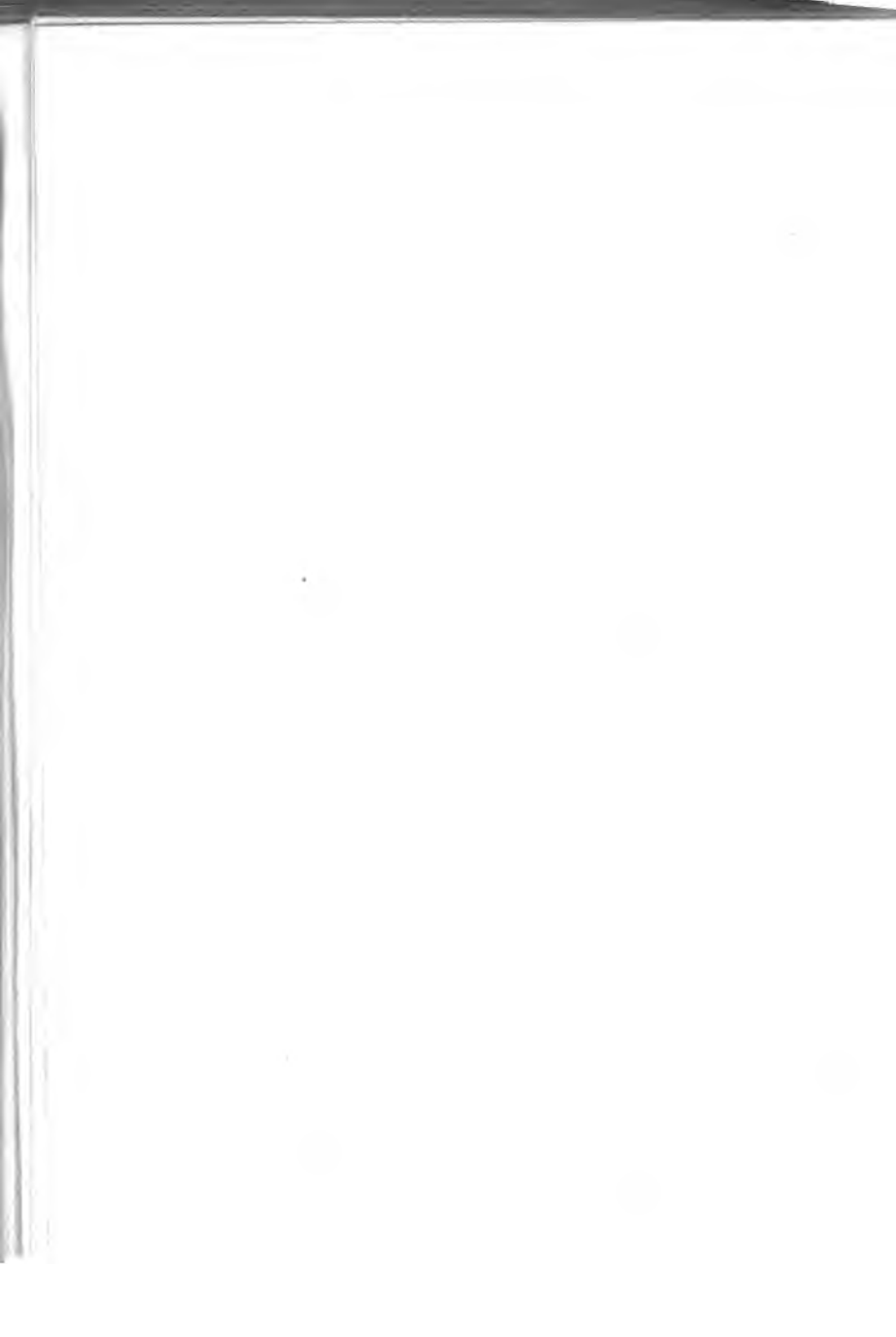
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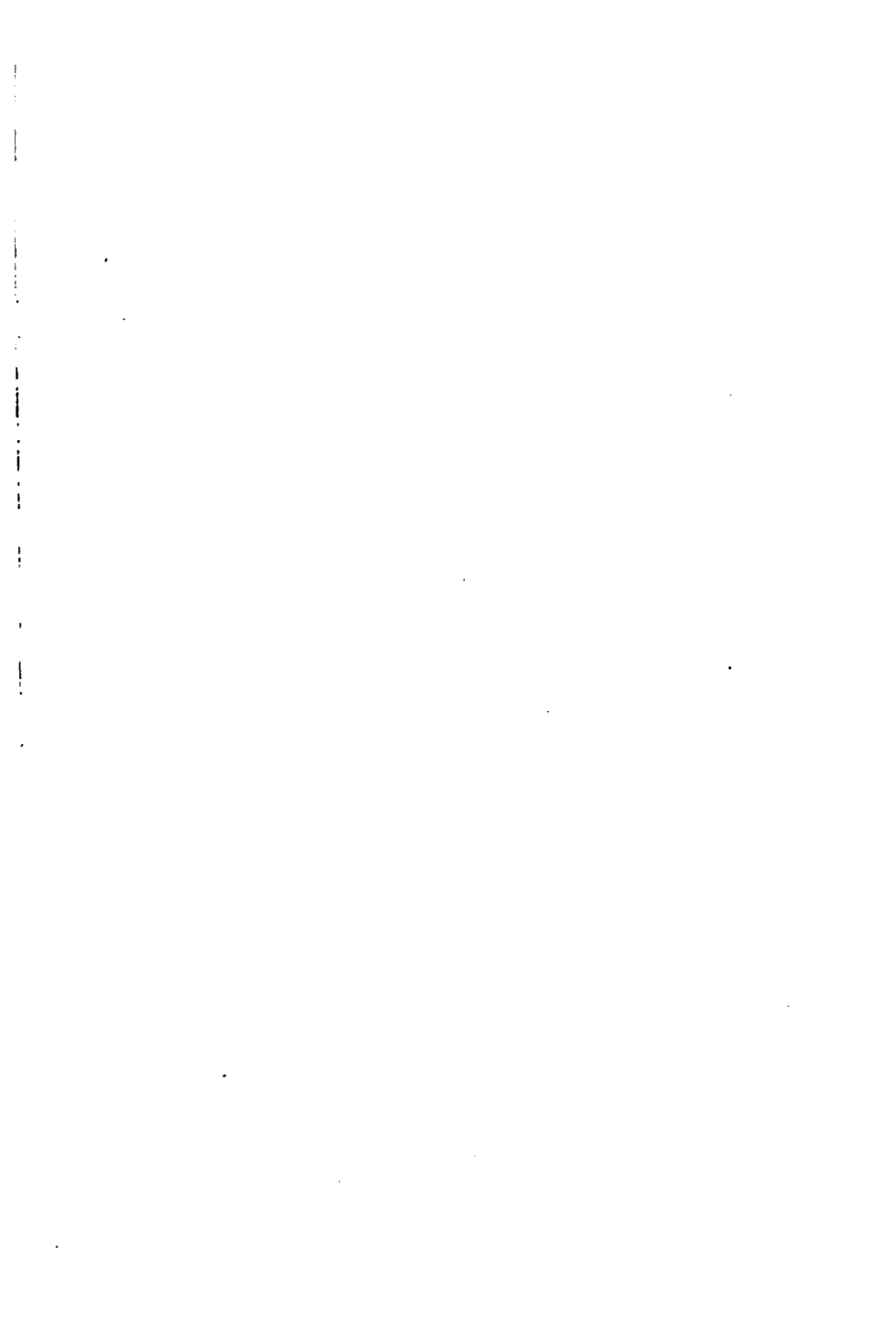
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